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THE

WORKS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON,

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

IN THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

FOURTH EDITION,

INCLUDING HIS COLLECTED LETTERS.

VOL. III.

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SOME

THINGS

OF

GREAT WEIGHT AND CONCERNMENT TO ALL,

BRIEFLY OPENED AND HELD FORTH FROM A TRUE SENSE AND UNDERSTANDING,

FOR THE HEALING OF THE RUINS AND BREACHES, WHICH THE ENEMY OF MANKIND HATH MADE IN MEN'S SOULS.

AS I.

Some Assertions concerning the Principle and Way of LIFE.

II.

Some further Directions to CHRIST, the Principle and Fountain of LIFE.

III.

The End of CHRIST'S Manifestation, his Salvation and whom he saves.

IV.

Three Questions answered, concerning Justification.

V.

Of the pure, constant, eternal, unchangeable Nature of God's Truth.

Written in the time of my confinement in Aylesbury, when Love was working in me, and the Life of God in me travailing and wrestling with the Lord for the salvation of others.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME THINGS OF GREAT WEIGHT &C.

I. Some assertions concerning the principle and way of life.

That it is a great and hard matter to come into a capacity of knowing and receiving the truth. It is no hard matter to take up any religion that a man finds in the world. To read scriptures, to believe what a man finds related there, according to his understanding of them; yea, to believe that he hath the light and help of the Spirit in his reading and understanding; to apply himself also to practise and observe what he finds therein required; and to aim at holiness, &c.; this is no hard matter; every man that is serious, and seeks religion of any kind but in the weight of a man's spirit, may go thus far. But all this administers not the true capacity, but he that meets with it, must go further than thus.

2. That which gives the true capacity is a principle of life from God, and there alone and nowhere else, can man meet with it and receive it. This principle is the seed of the kingdom, or heavenly leaven, with which the mind must be in some measure leavened, ere it can come into a true capacity of understanding and receiving the truth. And in this leaven must it abide and grow up, if it abide and grow in the true knowledge, &c.

3. That from this principle, and in this principle, not only the true light and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and all spiritual things is given and received; but also the true faith, the true love, the true sanctification, the true justification, the true peace, the true joy, &c. And what of these is not received and held here, is not of the truth, but a garment of men's own forming, and not the covering of the Spirit.

4. That the Spirit himself sows this principle, and is received in this principle. And he that receives this principle, and is born of this principle, receives and is born of the Spirit; and he that receives it not, nor is born of it, neither hath received nor is born of the Spirit; but is but in the imagination and self-conceit about the things of God, but is not in the truth as it is in Jesus.

5. That in this principle the new covenant is made with the soul and entered into; and he that receives this principle from the hand of God, receives life, and enters into the covenant of life, and feels the pure fear, wherein God cleanseth the heart, and whereby he keeps the heart clean, and feels the laws of God daily writing there by the finger of God's Spirit, and feels the power and sense of the Spirit to teach and cause obedience; so that the yoke, which is hard to the transgressing nature (alienated from the life and power), is easy (and as I may say natural) to him that is born of this nature. For being dead with Christ, and risen with Christ, and changed into the nature of Christ, by the principle which is of him, through the power and Spirit of Christ, which worketh therein; he can say as Christ did, when the Lord calls him to any thing; Lo, I come; it is my meat and drink, yea, my great delight, to do thy will, O God! yea, thy law is written in the midst of my bowels!

6. Among those who are gathered into this principle, and abide in the sense, light, and life of this principle, there is great love and unity. They are of one mind, of one heart, of one soul, of one spirit, of one life, gathered into one demonstration of truth; and there is no jarring, no doubting, no dissenting, &c. All this is out, in the world, in the earthly wisdom, in the earthly professions and walkings; but it is excluded the principle of truth, and them that are gathered into and abide therein.

7. That all that are not gathered into, nor walk nor live in this principle, they are yet in the darkness and error from the pure power of God, and stand and walk in slippery places; and though their way may seem very right, and their estate and condition sure (as to God-wards) in their own eyes

and judgment, yet it is not really so; but they are but in a dream concerning the truth, not in the truth itself; which (how strange soever it may seem to them at present to be affirmed concerning them) yet they shall certainly feel it to be so, when the Lord by his powerful voice and bright appearance of his Spirit awaketh them. For many things go for truth now with men in the dark, which will vanish like smoke before the light of the day; and then that only which is truth indeed shall have the glory and praise of being accounted so; and then what will become of those who have mistook about truth, and are not clothed with the pure wedding-garment (the spotless life and righteousness of the Son), but only with that which they have accounted so?

8. That to those that see in the light of this principle, the mountain of the Lord's house is discovered; and those that abide and grow up therein, they know and experience it established above all mountains, and exalted above all hills; all earthly knowledge, earthly religions, earthly ways, earthly worships, earthly spirits and minds, &c., in their greatest exaltations and glory, being far beneath it. And here the feast of fat things, and wines on the lees well refined, even the fruit of the vine which gladdeth and refresheth the very heart of God, is fed on and partaken of by those that dwell here. For the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit is here revealed, in the holy house and tabernacles which are built here; and here they make their feast, bringing forth the riches of their nature, spirit, and precious life, on which they feed with the soul, and give unto the soul favor and ability to feed with them; in which food there is the life, strength, righteousness, and joy of the kingdom given forth and received.

9. That in the heart which discovers iniquity, reproveth it, witnesseth against it, and striveth with the mind to turn it from it, and to wait for life and power from on high, that is this very principle. In that is the divine nature, even the nature of God's Spirit, which was always against sin, and ever will so be, and in all its appearances testifieth

against it, and in love to the creature striveth with the creature to convince it of that in it which is contrary to God, and to draw it to that strength and divine virtue which stoppeth it, beateth it back, and worketh it out of the mind and nature of the creature, as it can get entrance, and is hearkened and subjected to. For there is no salvation, but by the cross and yoke of our Lord Jesus Christ; for in that is the power to crucify the affections and lusts, which lead into sin and death, and will not cease to tempt and lead aside, till the soul be gathered into unity with that, and become subject to that which is contrary to them. So that this is the main thing in religion, even to know Christ revealed in the soul as a standard against corruption, and to be gathered under his banner, which is the cross, or that living principle in the heart which resisteth the corrupt principle; and he that is gathered hither, and continueth faithfully fighting here, shall receive mercy, help, and strength from on high, in every time of need.

10. That the true and certain way of knowledge of the things of God, is in the faith and obedience of this principle. It is not by reasoning and considering things in the mind (after the manner of men) that a man comes to know spiritual things; but they are spiritually revealed by God, after a spiritual manner, to the believer, to the obeyer; and they are revealed to him in his believing, in his obeying, in his waiting, in his holy fearing, in his distrusting of himself, and feeling his own insufficiency, either to attain them or retain them, but as the Lord God makes them manifest in him and preserves him in the sense of them. "He that doth my will, shall know of my doctrine," saith Christ. This is the way. Wouldst thou know what God requires of thee, what this or that is which appears in this or that sort as truth, whether it be so, or no? Mind this principle in thee, mind the pure, the holy light, inward touches and leadings of this pure, divine principle; that will make manifest to thee whatever is fit for thee in thy present state to know; and thou art not to desire more, but as a child to rest contented with that portion of knowledge and strength,

which the wise and tender Father judgeth fit for thee; and as thy state groweth capable of more, he will not fail to administer to thee. And what he giveth thee is good, seasonable, and proper for thee, which thou mayest safely feed upon and enjoy in the sense and fear of him. But if thou press after what he would not as yet have thee know, thou enterest into the will and wisdom of the flesh; and there are the disputes, discontents, murmurings, and ill tempers and dispositions of the mind, which there will increase and grow upon thee to thy hurt.

11. That the mind that is gathered here will find great opposition, both within and without; insomuch as he shall not easily pass from out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son, but through many trials, temptations, oppositions, and dangers many ways, for turning the back on the kingdom of darkness, by joining to the principle of life, in hearkening and subjecting to the light thereof; hereupon the powers of darkness both within and without bestir themselves to hinder the soul's progress, and to bring it back again into subjection under the will and wisdom of the flesh.

Oh, how doth the will and wisdom strive within a man's own bosom! What risings of the impure are felt against the pure! What secret and subtle reasonings to ensnare and entangle the mind! and if they cannot draw the soul back from the Lord and the living path, then they strive to vex, afflict, and torment it! There is none knows what is felt inwardly by the followers of the Lamb, but those that travel with him in the living path; they are often sensible of that they meet with in their travels, and how hard it is to abide in the path of salvation, insomuch as they understand the truth of that saying: "If the righteous scarcely be saved." It is scarcely indeed! so subtle, so strong, such a many holds, so many stratagems hath the subtle, twining, crooked, piercing leviathan, to ensnare, perplex, over-run, and entangle them with. And then outwardly, the same flesh, the same earthly spirit and wisdom, the same crooked, hellish will, is striving in men without also, to bear down

and subject the pure principle in them who are born of God, to their devices and institutions, decrees, ways, customs, &c., which are of the will and wisdom of the flesh. So that, as the apostle said, *through much tribulation is the entrance of the soul into the heavenly kingdom;* and there is no avoiding the many tribulations, but by turning aside out of the way (which though thereby the flesh get ease for a time, it will be to the greater loss and sorrow in the end). For the spirit of the world, the wisdom of the world, the nature, religion, worship, and whole course of the world, is contrary to the way of the pure wisdom and Spirit of God, and useth it as its enemy, wherever it findeth it; and they that will not bow to the spirit, wisdom, and way of the world, must feel the force of its beastly claws. For is it not a beastly thing (even far beneath the nature of a man) to persecute that which is good; to hurt, reproach, and pursue the innocent life of the Lamb? And yet this is that which the spirit of the world (which is not of God, but wise, and seemingly just and righteous in another wisdom, nature, and principle) always hath done, still doth, and will do to the end.

12. That there is a glorious crown prepared for all those, who are gathered to the Lamb in this principle, and abide with him faithful therein to the end, hearing his voice, believing the demonstration of his Spirit, obeying him in all his motions and requirings, undergoing every yoke, which is appointed by him to yoke down the fleshly nature and mind, and taking up every cross of every kind in meekness, patience, and fear. And there is not only a crown laid up for them at last, but the power of the Lord God is nigh unto them to work all in them, to bear them up through and over all, and to keep them to and in that principle, whereby and whereinto his tender mercy and powerful arm gathered them. For as the power of the Lord began the work,—for there could never any heart be gathered from under the power of darkness to the light which leads out of it, but by the power of the Lord; for the powers of darkness stand between, and would hold and keep their own, did not a greater power appear, and put forth itself for the soul

against them;—I say, as the power of the Lord began the work, so the same power alone is able to go on with it and perfect it; and it will go on with it and perfect it upon the same terms it began, and no other. How were the terms at first, but on a giving up of the soul in the faith to the Lord, in the sense of his love and goodness and mercy, touching, and drawing, and making willing? And how is the standing, but in the same giving up still; in abiding with the Lord, in hearkening to the voice of the Lord, in waiting for the wisdom and counsel of the Lord? But if any man draw back from this, if he despise the Spirit and his motions and counsels, and hearken to the voice of a contrary spirit, believing and following it, like the angels that fell, he departeth from his place and habitation, which he had in the drawings, life, and power of God, and is not to God what he was before, nor is God to him what he was before, but the Lord, who loved him before, and delighted in him to do him good, hath now no pleasure in him, he being turned from that which the Lord loveth, and in which he hath determined and appointed to choose, love, and own the children of men; who, as they are gathered thither, are his children; as they that are gathered from thence, into a contrary principle, are the children of the wicked one.

And now what is of man in all this? Where is the man that can boast before the Lord, who is thus saved? He hath all from a principle; yea, he is gathered into, preserved in, and abideth in this principle by the power, goodness, and mercy of the Lord. The power begins the work in him, the power accompanies him; the power carries him through, or he falls and miscarries. There is no man can stand any longer here, than he submits to and is upheld by the power, nor act nor suffer, but as the power acts in him and helps him to suffer. Let the man that boasteth, bring forth somewhat of his own, if he can, here. Is the will at any time his own? Doth not he that is spiritual, and in the true sense, always find God to work in him to will, whenever he willeth rightly and holily? And if he

cannot will of himself, can he do any thing of himself? Can he believe of himself, pray of himself, wait of himself, resist enemies and temptations of himself; nay, so much as give a look to the Lord at any time of himself? Indeed, in the grace of the Lord, and the principle of his life, there is sufficiency: and therein he that is joined to the Lord, and become one Spirit with him, what can he not do here? but that is, as he is new-made in Christ, and as Christ ariseth, lives, and acts in him: which he that is in the true sense and feeling will still acknowledge, not only in his words to men, but in his heart and spirit before the Lord.

II. Some further directions to Christ, the principle and fountain of life, by way of question and answer.

Quest. 1. What is Christ?

Ans. He is the word of eternal life, who is appointed of the Father to give life, and who giveth life to them that receive him, and obey his gospel. He is the Son of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the righteousness of God, the Saviour and salvation of God. The peace, the rest, the joy, the life of the soul. The King, the Priest, the Prophet, the Shepherd of the sheep. The way, the truth, the door, the vine, the olive-tree, into which the living are gathered and ingrafted. And he is also a hammer, an axe, a sword, a fire to the corrupt tree and fruit.

Quest. 2. How is Christ known, received, and obeyed?

Ans. As a seed; as the seed of life, as the seed of the kingdom, as a leaven, as salt; as a little small thing, rising up in the heart against all that is great and mighty. As a branch out of the dry ground; as a little child to lead, which all the wisdom of man and flesh cannot but despise; and therefore that must first be brought down in some measure in the heart, before Christ can be owned in the heart, and subjected to.

Quest. 3. How is the seed received?

Ans. By feeling its virtues, manifestations, and operations in the heart, and subjecting thereto.

Quest. 4. What are its virtues, manifestations, and operations?

Ans. They are all living, and have all living and powerful effects upon the heart, as they are let in. They are all against darkness, sin, and death; tending to discover it, to turn the mind from it, to lead out of the captivity, power, and reach of it; and they are also all for God, tending to prepare the heart for him, and to bring it into union and covenant with him.

Quest. 5. What is the first operation of the seed to the soul, wherein it is to be waited for, and closed with, that the soul may come into the further sense and feeling of it?

Ans. It is according to the state of the soul; which being in darkness, sin, and death, it appears as a light to discover the darkness, sin, and death, and to lead out of it to the redeeming power. And then, to them that thus receive it, and wait upon it in the fear and humility which it gives and begets, it appears as life, quickening the soul, and as power, enabling it in some measure to live to God, and to walk with him in the way to the kingdom.

Quest. 6. How comes this way to be hid from some that desire after the Lord, and to know his truth as it is in Jesus?

Ans. From the subtlety of the enemy, who blinds the eye which alone can see, and stops the ear which alone can hear, and hardens the heart which alone can understand; and hath devices, snares, and baits, and false reasonings from scriptures, and from experiences, which any one that hearkens unto, and is entangled and ensnared in, is his captive, and cannot be at liberty to see, or know, or embrace the truth as it is; but his heart is deceived about it, and filled with prejudices against it. (Therefore such should wait for the true circumcision, that they might hearken to the Lord, come out of the enemy's snares and subtle devices, and live) as Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3.

Quest. 7. But may not these be saved notwithstanding?

Ans. There is no salvation but in and by Christ Jesus;

and the salvation is not to them that received a bare notion of him under the law, or another empty notion under the profession of the gospel; but only to them that receive him as he was promised, as the holy seed: for in that alone is the redemption, freedom from sin, and power of life felt, and no where else. So that he that hath not this knowledge of him, hath not the true knowledge; nor he that doth not so believe in him, doth not rightly believe; nor he that doth not so hope in him, doth not rightly hope: and without the true knowledge, the right faith and hope, how can any man be saved?

Therefore awake! awake! O weary, thirsty souls! come to the spring of life; come to the living waters. Become little, that ye may learn of Christ; wait to have your eyes anointed, that ye may see him, and your hearts opened, that ye may know and receive him. Oh! wait for the manifestation of this seed in you, be abased before him, join to him, receive his checks, receive mourning and repentance from him; wait for the light and faith that he gives, and the power that issues from his throne, and ye shall find him the bruiser of the serpent's head (which none else is able to do), and the breaker of the bond of iniquity, which keeps down the just, and sets the unjust at liberty, till he dissolve it. And this is sufficient to manifest against all the disputes of the mind, that this is he, and no other, by his doing that which none else can do. This demonstration he gave to the *Jews in the flesh*, in his appearance in flesh; and this demonstration he giveth now to the *Jews in spirit*, in his appearance in Spirit, whereby he satisfieth their hearts, and putteth them out of doubt that it is he. And we must profess to the world (as our hearts are drawn and guided by the Lord, to give forth the testimony we have received of him) that we look not, yea, we cannot look, for another. Whom should we look for besides the Lamb, besides the Word which was in the beginning, besides him who is one with the Father, and hath the eternal life, wisdom, righteousness, and power of the Father, and manifesteth it in us? We look indeed for more of the same, and the more

universal and powerful breaking of it forth; but another thing, another Christ, another life, Spirit, power, &c., we cannot look for. And this we further testify, that whoever receives this testimony in the truth and uprightness of his heart, waiting on that which discovers sin to him, and in simplicity joining and giving up thereto, and walking with him in forsaking the evil and cleaving to the good, in the faith of him and of his power, he shall witness the same thing with us; and all the reasonings, imaginations, and strong-holds of his mind shall be battered down, and come to nothing, before the virtue, power, and life of him who thus is pleased to appear and manifest himself after the apostasy, even as he did before, even in an inward principle, an inward seed, an inward light, an inward life, an inward word, an inward power. And friends and people, mark in your minds, and learn to put a right difference between that which stumbles you, and that which draws and convinces you. What makes any of you own truth at any time? Is it not an inward, lively, powerful touch and demonstration of God's Spirit? What makes you afterwards doubt and question? Is it not another thing, of a different nature from this? Is it not a subtle reasoning, whereby the enemy twines into your spirits, and begets first a doubt concerning, then a prejudice, and at last a great strength against that, which before ye had some sense of, and some unity with, in the teachings and quickenings of the Spirit of the Lord? And what spirit is it in you, that thus worketh in your minds? And whither doth he lead you by these workings and subtle reasonings? Oh that ye might see, oh that ye might feel, the snare, and know with us the preserver therefrom! for we have met with much of this; and had we not been helped by the Lord, and given up to him, we had been entangled to this very day, as ye are. And he that hath helped us, waits to be gracious to you; and oh, that you would not reject his help, that he might deliver you also! that ye also might bless his name, in feeling the benefit and joy of his preservation. And this is written in true bowels and tender, yearning love, that ye

might be a little stirred up to wait to know the Father's house, and might feed on the bread which abounds therein, and drink of the water which makes fresh and living to God, and be clothed with the raiment which the master of the family gives to his spouse, children, and servants.

III. The end of Christ's manifestation, his salvation, and whom he saves.

Christ came (and is manifest in the hearts of those that receive him) to destroy the works of the devil, and to set the soul free from sin; and whom he maketh free, are free indeed. Is the liberty which the Son giveth inferior in this life, in its kind, to the captivity and bondage of the enemy in its kind? Which of them is stronger; the enemy to inthrall, or the Lord Jesus Christ to set free from his thraldom? Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, the mighty Saviour (who is more able to save than the enemy to destroy) delivereth his Israel out of the hands of their enemies, and so mightily and powerfully delivereth them, that they are able (in the power of his might) to serve him, without fear of them any more, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their life.

It is true, there is a state of darkness, sin, and death, wherein Satan reigns; and there is a state of weakness, wherein Satan much prevails, if the watch be not strictly kept to him who is the everlasting strength; and there is a state of sighing and groaning under the body of sin and death, and crying out, who shall deliver from it! But there is also a state of growth in the life, and of victory (through the life) over that which captived and caused to cry out. There is a treading down of Satan under the feet by the God of peace, insomuch as not only the elders, but the very young men in Christ, overcome and triumph over him, feeling the entrance ministered to them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom, into which no unclean thing can enter. Oh! wonderful is the travel to the holy rest of the pure

life! Happy are they that meet with the true leader, and faithfully follow him, till they have travelled through and overcome all that stands in their way! For to them, and to them alone, is the promise of the possession of the everlasting inheritance; and such find and feel the Lord to be their God indeed, and themselves to be his children (brought forth in his holy life and nature), which to feel in truth and certain knowledge is more than tongue can utter.

Christ saves only those that come unto him, and believe in him, and so are born of his Spirit; and by the faith, and through the strength and virtue of his Spirit, overcome the wicked one, his works, snares, and temptations in their hearts. And these feel in themselves the root of his life, the holy seed of his kingdom springing up in them, into which they are ingrafted, and become one with him, and so bringing forth the holy fruit, the living grapes, the new and righteous conversation wherein the life of God shines, and is glorified. Now it is not knowing, or believing, or receiving any thing into the old understanding that avails with God, or the reformation which is there wrought; but the new creature alone, created of God in Jesus Christ. This is born of God, this lives in him, this is clothed with him. This puts off the old man, with his deeds, and puts on the newness of the nature and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; so that this man is as really in Christ, in the Spirit, in the new Adam, found in him, formed in him, covered with him, as the first man, or nature, is in the old Adam. Therefore this is the main thing in religion, to mind the seed of the kingdom, the leaven of the kingdom, its growth in the mind, soul, and spirit, and the mind's, soul's, and spirit's gathering into, and growth in it. And here is faith, the true faith, the true love, the true hope, the true meekness and patience, the true justification and sanctification felt, and not elsewhere; but those that are out of this, out of Christ the seed, out of Christ the Word, out of Christ the wisdom, righteousness, and power of the Father, are only in a dream concerning these things, but know not the truth and real

nature of them, as they are felt in Jesus, by those who are truly ingrafted in him, and livingly grow up in him.

IV. Three Questions answered concerning Justification.

Quest. 1. What is justifying, or justification with God?

Ans. It is God's owning the state, works, or actions of a creature, either inwardly in his own mind, or manifestly to them. This is God's justifying of them, or his justification; his disowning or disallowing them is his condemnation. As for instance: God's owning Adam in the upright estate of his innocency, wherein God created him, and any thing he did in that state and spirit, was his justifying of him and his works. God's disowning and disallowing his hearkening to his wife and the serpent, and his eating the forbidden fruit upon their temptation, was his condemnation thereof.

Quest. 2. What is it God justifies, and what is it he condemns?

Ans. That which God justifieth is the Spirit of his Son, the life of his Son, the nature of his Son, brought forth in any creature, the faith which is in him; and so the creature, as it is in the obedience which is of him, and the works that are wrought in him. But the fallen estate of man from him, and all that is done by man out of him, God condemns.

Quest. 3. How is justification received, kept, and grown up in? and what is the preservation out of condemnation?

Ans. Justification is only received by receiving him, who is the righteousness and justification, and only kept by abiding in him, and only increased by growing up in him. For as every one that is found in him is justified, so he that hath more of him, more of his life, more of his faith, more of his nature, more of his Spirit, more of the pure obedience, more of the garment of righteousness and salvation drawn over him,—he is more justified. For there are degrees of justification, as the soul that is really in the thing, and is acquainted with the true nature and dispensation of it from God, feels and knows. A father is more or less

pleased with his children, yea, with the same child sometimes; which is a true figure to man who is come under God's teachings. And the preservation out of condemnation is by being preserved out of that which God condemns: for no man upon the earth, that hath the true sense and feeling, shall ever find the Holy and Just One justifying him in his sins; but as the heart is turned from them, and by the power of life kept out of them. He that will be kept in the justification must be kept out of that which the justification is not to: for there he is not justified; but in his being drawn again out of it, and turning again from it, his justification, in the tender mercy of the Lord, is renewed.

Justification under the law was according to that covenant. He that walks with God in that covenant, he that walks in and after the Spirit of Christ,—he is therein justified; but he that walks after the flesh, and doth any thing that is fleshly,—that is not justified with God, nor he in that; but in the faith, which cleanseth and giveth victory over it: in that is the justification from it, and the pure, heavenly peace with the Lord God of life witnessed.

He that is in Christ, and receiveth his knowledge from Christ, and is kept in the pure fear and sense of him,—he understandeth the truth of these things; but he that is erred in spirit, and holds up but a literal knowledge (though from, or at least accompanied with, some remembrance of former feelings and experiences),—he errs about these things also; and deceit and a lie hath prevailed over him, as he will find, when the Lord confounds his wisdom and present apprehensions of things, by awakening his witness in him. For religion, the true religion, is a mystery; life is a mystery; Christ is a mystery; the Spirit is a mystery; faith is a mystery; obedience (the *pure obedience*) is a mystery; worship (the *spiritual worship* in and according to the new covenant) is a mystery; hid from the eyes of all the wise searchers of the world, but revealed to the least babe that is of God, and abideth in the quickened life of his Son. But many that are out of the mystery of truth are in the mystery of deceit, and have a knowledge or profession con-

cerning Christ, his Spirit, faith, obedience, the spiritual worship, &c., in that mystery of deceit, which they, for the present, account the true, and by it venture to judge, disallow, and condemn the truth itself; but that is not all to the hurt of the truth, or such as are in it; but rather to their own hurt and great danger. For the sparks which man kindles will never light him to God; the garments of man's righteousness (either according to his apprehensions of the letter of the law, or letter of the gospel) will never clothe him; but for all that, he must lie down in shame and sorrow, when the truth of God appears in his conscience, and all his shadows and deceits flee away.

Therefore hearken to the testimony from these, whom the Lord hath awakened, whom the Lord hath quickened, whom the Lord hath led out of the darkness of the night, into the light and brightness of the day; who have seen Jesus, and testify what they have seen, heard, felt, and handled of that eternal Word, which was from the beginning, which appeared in flesh, and afterwards in Spirit, before the apostasy, and hath again appeared, since the apostasy, as a shepherd, as a gatherer, as a seeker-out and preserver of his wandering sheep, who were driven from him in the cloudy and dark day. And if ye would hearken aright, breathe to the Lord in that which desires and longs after him, that he would circumcise the heart, and open the right ear in you, that the ear may hear his witness in you, that so ye may indeed know the voice of the shepherd, and in true understanding, sense, and constant experience, bear witness to that true testimony which Christ spake in the days of his flesh: "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me; but a stranger they will not follow; for they know not the voice of strangers."

V. Of the pure, constant, eternal, unchangeable nature of God's truth.

Truth is of God, and was with God, and in God, before any thing else had a being. Truth was before error or deceit: for it was from the truth that the error was, and it was about truth that the deceit was. There was somewhat which erred from truth, and brought in deceit into the world; but truth remains the same that it was, keeping its pure, eternal, unchangeable nature; and is not, nor ever was, nor ever can be, defiled or tainted with any error or deceit; but testifieth against it, reproveth it, and condemneth for it, draweth out of it, and delivereth from its bands and captivity, all those that hearken and cleave to it, in the faith which is of its nature and begetting.

The Father, the fountain of truth, is the same. The Son, his express image (whom he fills with himself, and in whom he appears), is the same. The Spirit, the anointing (who is *truth*, and no *lie*), is still the same. The principle or seed of truth is still the same. The doctrine and way of truth is still the same; for it was the same truth which was preached in shadows under the law, the substance whereof appears, and is witnessed in the gospel: and it was the same before the great apostasy, in the latter days from it, and all the time of the apostasy, and again after the apostasy. It hath the same nature still, the same properties, the same operations and effects, and gives forth the same testimony in the ears and hearts of all that are open to it. Indeed the minds of men, and the states of men, may often change in relation to truth; but truth itself changeth not, but is equal, fair, and just to all men upon the earth, in all ages and generations, always condemning that which is unjust, erroneous, and deceitful, and always justifying, what is pure, holy, and righteous.

Now is not this a pearl; Nay, is not this the pearl indeed, the precious pearl of price? Who would not buy it?

Who would not sell all for it? Who would not dig in the field, where this treasure is hid, until he find it? The field is near thee, O man! which thou art to purchase and dig in, and must feel torn up by the plow of God in some measure, before this pearl or treasure appear to thee; and thou must take up and bear the yoke and cross of Christ, until all be bowed down and crucified in thee which is contrary to its nature, before it be polished in thee, and thou come to behold and enjoy its riches and everlasting fulness. Oh, happy are they that are begotten and born of it! happy are they that know its voice, and give up to it, to be gathered and redeemed by it, out of all deceits, out of all errors, out of all that entangles and ensnares the soul in sin, misery, and utter perdition; for destruction and misery everlasting is out of it, and life and salvation is alone to be found in it.

There is a witness in every heart, which knows these things, and will testify it to their faces, when the light of God is opened in them, and its tongue speaks therein to them. Oh, happy they that wait for, know, hear, and subject to the heavenly voice, while the day of their visitation and reclaiming lasteth, wherein they may travel from sin to holiness, from death to life, by its help and guidance! Oh! why should man perish? Why should man hearken to that which hates him, and seeks his destruction, and stop his ear against that which loves him, and warns him of his danger in the dearness of love, and in tenderness of bowels towards him?

A

QUESTION

TO THE

PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY,

WHETHER

THEY HAVE THE TRUE, LIVING, POWERFUL, SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST, OR NO.

WITH

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING CHRIST, AND HIS APPEARANCES; HIS TAKING UPON HIM OUR FLESH; AS ALSO CONCERNING HIS FLESH AND BLOOD, AND OUR BEING FORMED THEREOF, AND FEEDING THEREON.

AND

AN INCITATION TO PROFESSORS SERIOUSLY TO CONSIDER, WHETHER THEY OR WE FAIL IN THE TRUE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND OWNING OF THE CHRIST WHICH DIED AT JERUSALEM.

Likewise

some propositions and considerations concerning the nature of church-worships and ordinances since the death of the apostles, for the sake of the simplicity, which hath been long held captive therein.

With the sounding of bowels towards thee, O England!

Also a faithful guidance to the principle and path of Truth.

With some sensible, experimental Questions and Answers from the Tenth Chapter of John.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON,

Prisoner in Aylesbury, who, by the counsel of the Lord, hath chosen rather to suffer affliction with the despised people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

PREFACE.

"THIS is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Whom did the Father send? Did he not send the Son of his love? From whence did he send him? Did he not send him out of his own bosom? Whither did he send him? Did he not send him into the world, to take upon him a body, and glorify the name of the Father, doing his will therein? He laid down his glory, stripping himself of the form of God, and appearing in habit as a man, in their raiment, with their garment upon him; in which, as a servant, the seed (the heir of all) served the Father. And now his work being as good as done, he looks back at the glory which he had laid down for the Father's sake, looking up to the Father for the restoring of it to him again. "I have glorified thee on the earth," saith he, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before thee world was." John xvii. 4, 5.

Now having sought and travelled (from my childhood) after the true knowledge of God, and of his Christ; and having been satisfied with nothing else that ever I could meet with, and having at length (through the tender mercy of the Lord, and guidance of his Spirit) met with this, and been satisfied therewith, finding it to be the eternal life, the true food, the living power, the pure rest, the joy and salvation of my soul, I cannot but testify it to those that lay out their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not.

We (some of us at least) laid out as much of our money as others, who now despise us, have done; and as much of our labor; and (I may speak it in the fear of the Lord, and in true sense, without boasting) some of us had as much of that which they feed on, and call bread, as they have now. Yet when the Lord brought us to the true balance, we found it not to be bread, nor able to give the soul true satisfaction. The bread was not that which we then called bread, but that which we overlooked, and wist not what it was. But the eternal life which was hid with the Father, and is manifested in the Son, and made known to the soul (as the Son is manifested to it, and revealed in it),—that is bread indeed, that is meat which perisheth not, but will endure when all literal and outward knowledge of God and Christ fails, and will fall short of satisfying that hunger of the soul, which is after the substance itself.

Now to draw men's minds to a sense of truth, to a sense of that which is the thing, that they might know the bread indeed, that they might know the living waters, come to them, and drink thereof, and find Christ in them a well of water springing up to eternal life; therefore was it in my heart to give forth this question, and the ensuing queries; which he that rightly answers, must know the thing; and he that doth not rightly know the thing, by his inability to answer, may find that he doth not, and so may wait upon God that he may receive the knowledge of it, and come to it for the eternal life which it freely giveth.

The Jews were puzzled with a literal knowledge of the law and prophets, and about the Messiah to come, according to their understanding of the prophecies concerning him, and so were kept from the true knowledge thereby. Most sorts of those that now profess Christ, are puzzled about a knowledge concerning the outward body, flesh, and blood of Christ, according as they apprehend the Scriptures to speak; and so the veil is over their hearts likewise, and they cannot see the eternal life and substance, no more than the Jews, but by an outward and literal knowledge are kept back from the thing, as the Jews were. Now the

breathing of my heart to the Lord is: To take away the veil off all hearts that sincerely desire after truth, and to open the true eye in them, that they may see the desire and beloved of their souls, and may be led by him into the true travel, out of self, towards the kingdom; yea, into the very land of the living, where the food of life is fed upon, where the living springs flow, where are vineyards which we planted not, and dwelling-places which we built not, where the fruit of the vine of God's planting (the wine of the kingdom) is drunk of, even new in the kingdom, with the Father and Son in the Spirit, who are One and All there.

The Lord give a sense and understanding, that the ear of the needy, the afflicted in spirit, the mourners, the captives, the bowed-down may hear, and may be drawn to touch that which hath the virtue in it, and which effectually redeemeth those that wait upon it, from all that boweth down and oppresseth.

A QUESTION

TO THE

PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE question is not, whether they know what is said of Christ in the Scriptures; but whether they know it *savingly, truly, livingly, powerfully*. Yea, they may know what is said of him, and yet not know him of whom those things are said. As it was with the Scribes and Pharisees; they knew what was said of Christ in the law and prophets; but they knew not himself, when he appeared in that body of flesh. So men may now know what the apostles and the evangelists have said concerning his appearance in a body of flesh (concerning his birth, circumcision, baptism, preaching, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession,

&c.), and yet not know him of whom these things are said. Yea, they may know what is said concerning the Word which was from the beginning, and yet not know the Word, the power, the life itself.

Since the prevailing of the apostles' testimony, the way of the enemy hath not been directly to deny Christ, but to bring men into such a knowledge of Christ, as saves not. And as the enemy did own Christ, when he appeared in that body of flesh, saying: "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God;" so he hath found it for his advantage, almost ever since, to own that appearance of his. So that this he doth not oppose, nor men's knowledge and understanding of scriptures, so as to confirm them in this. But the saving knowledge, the true knowledge, the living knowledge, the powerful knowledge of truth,—that he always opposeth; for that alone overturns and destroys his kingdom in man, and brings man from out of his reach.

Now there is a vast difference between knowing the relations concerning a thing, and knowing the thing related of. And there is also a great deal of difference between believing the relations concerning a thing, and believing in the thing which is related of.

Spiritual things cannot be savingly known, but in union with them, in the receiving of them. A man can never really know the Spirit of God, by all that can be said concerning it, but he must first feel somewhat of it, whereby he may truly know it. So the peace, the joy, the life, the power,—they pass the understanding; and a man can never rightly know them by reading, or comprehending ever so much concerning them; but by coming out of himself, and travelling thither where they are given and made manifest, he may come into acquaintance with them. And if the peace which Christ gives, the joy, the life, the power, cannot be thus known by literal descriptions; how can he, who is the fulness of all, the fountain of them all, the treasury of all perfection, in whom are hid all the riches and treasures of wisdom and knowledge,—how can he be known by outward and literal descriptions?

Now we have travelled through these things. We knew formerly what ye know now; and we also know now, what God hath given us further; and what our former knowledge was, and what our present knowledge is. And this is it which gives us satisfaction.

Our knowledge is in a principle, wherein we receive our capacity of knowing, and wherein the Father (from whom the principle came) teacheth us. And this is his way of teaching us; by making us one with the thing he teacheth. Thus we learn Christ, by being born of him, by putting him on. Thus we know his righteousness, his life, his wisdom, his power, by receiving a proportion of them, which giveth an ability to discern and acknowledge the fulness. And in this we receive the understanding of the Scriptures, and know the seed of the woman (which bruiseth the serpent's head), by receiving the seed, by feeling its growth in us, and its power over the enemy. Then we know the thing; likewise we know the woman that brings forth this seed after the Spirit, which is the Jerusalem above; and we know also, and singly acknowledge, the bringing forth of it outwardly after the flesh. This seed we know to be the seed of Abraham, the seed of David after the flesh, and the seed of God after the power of the endless life; and we are taught of God to give the due honor to each; to the seed of God in the first place, to the seed of David in the second place. There was the seed that wrought the thing, which seed was the life; and the seed in which he wrought it, which was formed into a vessel like ours, but without sin, in which the pure Lamb appeared in the pure power of life, which kept the vessel pure; and so he (who was to be the first fruits) had the honor above all his brethren, being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

But we also are born of the same seed. He is formed in us; we are formed of him; we are as well of his flesh and blood, as he was of ours. And by being thus formed, and feeling him grow up in us, and receiving an understanding from him, and in him, thus we come to know him, and to understand the words of scripture concerning him. By

feeling and knowing the Lamb in our vessels, we know also what was the Lamb in his vessel.

Thus we know things in the certainty and demonstration of God's Spirit, even in the light which shines from him, and in the life which he begets; and we speak of things as they are, and as we feel them to be in the true life, which the Spirit of Christ hath begotten in us. And we can truly say concerning the Scriptures: that now we believe, not so much because of the relation of things concerning Christ, which we have found in them; but because we have seen and received the thing which the Scriptures speak of, and find it to be the very thing indeed, the very Christ of God, the spotless one, the living garment of righteousness and salvation, wherein God findeth no fault, and in which the soul appears without blame before him. And concerning this, can we speak words of its nature, words of its virtue, words of its life, power, and righteousness; which that which is of the flesh cannot hear, but that which is born of God naturally owneth and understandeth. Why so? Because it knoweth the nature of the thing, and receiveth them in the savour thereof. Can life deny life? Can the birth of life deny that which springs out of the same womb? No, no. The children which are born of wisdom, do justify wisdom in its several sproutings-forth and appearances; but that which denies it is a birth after the letter, a birth after the literal and outward knowledge of things, a birth of the comprehending wisdom; that indeed reproacheth and blasphemeth the incomprehensible wisdom, in its incomprehensible ways, and would restrain life to what they apprehend, or can comprehend by the letter concerning it.

And this may be a great evidence to professors, that they know not indeed Christ in his nature, Spirit, life, and power; because they speak not of him as persons who feel the thing, and speak from the present sense of it, and acquaintance with it, but only as persons that bring forth a notion they have received into their understandings. And yet they fail therein also; for they speak not of Christ according as the Scriptures hold him forth, compared one

with another, but as they have grossly apprehended concerning him from some scriptures, as the Jews outward did. For the Scriptures speak not only of a body, but also of him that appeared in the body; nor only of bodily flesh, blood, and bones, but also of such flesh and bones, whereof Christ and his church consist. He is Christ (say the scriptures) who is one with the Father, who came from the Father, in whom the Father was, and who was in the Father; so said Jesus of himself (lifting up his eyes to heaven, and praying to the Father for his disciples, and the children whom the Father had given him) more than once in that seventeenth chapter of John. Yea, he is Christ, whom a man cannot see, but he must see the Father also; and whom, whosoever seeth the Father, seeth; who was before Abraham was; whom no man could know whence he was, even as no man can know whence the Father is. Christ granted the Jews that they knew him, and whence he was as to his body; and yet for all that, he was the Christ who was to come, whom no man knew from whence he was. What was that, Christ called *me*, speaking to Philip? "Hast thou not known me, Philip? Hast thou not seen me?" What! dost thou know me after the flesh, after the body? Dost thou take that for me? Have I been so long with you, and do you know me no better than so? The body is from below, the body is like one of yours (only sanctified by the Father, and preserved without sin); but I am the same Spirit, life, and being with the Father. We are one substance, one pure power of life, and we cannot be divided; but he that sees one, must needs see both; and he that knows one, must needs know both. This is the Lamb of God which John bare witness of, which he said was before him, John i. 15. which the body was not.

Now friends, if you have this living spiritual knowledge, if ye hold it in him that is true; then own and acknowledge it (as it is expressed in the Scriptures, and as God hath now brought it forth in his people), that ye may manifest yourselves to that which is of God, that ye are of him. There is an understanding and wisdom of man, and there is a

witness of God, which witness gives true judgment. Man (at best) judgeth but according as things appear to him from the Scriptures; but the witness judgeth of the things of God in the demonstration of the Spirit, according as they are felt and known to be in him.

But if ye have not this knowledge, but have long laid out your money and labor for that which is not bread, nor can yield the true satisfaction; oh, come to the waters, and receive that which is given freely, without money and without price! Oh, sell all for the pearl, for the knowledge which is of life, for the knowledge which is life! "I am the way, the truth, and the life," saith Christ; this is life eternal to know. And wait to feel the rock laid as a foundation in you, even the seed of God, the life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ revealed in you, and your souls born of it, and built upon it. Oh that ye could come out of your own understandings, that ye might feel and receive the love of my heart, and know the travail of my bowels for you; that ye might be born of the truth, and know and receive it as it is in Jesus, and as it is felt in the Spirit, and its own pure power!

Now a little further, to remove the scruples and prejudices out of the minds of such as sometimes have been touched with the power of truth, and have had the witness of God reached to in their hearts; but afterwards the enemy hath raised mists, and cast blocks in their way, stirring up in them hard thoughts against us, as if we denied what the Scriptures affirm in this thing, and indeed (in effect) that Christ which died at Jerusalem, and set up a natural principle within, instead thereof:

To remove this out of the minds of the honest-hearted (who in the guidance of God might light on this paper), I shall open my heart nakedly herein.

1. We do own that the Word of God (the only begotten of the Father) did take up a body of the flesh of the virgin Mary, who was of the seed of David, according to the Scriptures, and did the will of the Father therein, in holy obedience unto him, both in life and death.

2. That he did offer up the flesh and blood of that body (though not only so; for he poured out his soul, he poured out his life) a sacrifice or offering for sin (do not, oh! do not stumble at it; but rather wait on the Lord to understand it: for we speak in this matter what we know), a sacrifice unto the Father, and in it tasted death for every man; and that it is upon consideration (and through God's acceptance of this sacrifice for sin) that the sins of believers are pardoned, that God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, or who is of the faith of Jesus.

3. What is attributed to that body, we acknowledge and give to that body in its place, according as the Scripture attributeth it, which is through and because of that which dwelt and acted in it. But that which sanctified and kept the body pure (and made all acceptable in him) was the life, holiness, and righteousness of the Spirit. And the same thing that kept his vessel pure, it is the same thing that cleanseth us. The value which the natural flesh and blood had, was from that; in its coming from that, in its acting in that, in its suffering through that: yea, indeed, that hath the virtue; that is it which is of an unchangeable nature, which abideth for ever; which is pure, and maketh pure for ever; and it is impossible for a man to touch it, but he must feel cleansing by it. Now this living virtue and power man was shut out from by the fall; but through the true knowledge of the death of Christ, the way is made open for it again, and man brought to it to be baptized, washed, cleansed, sanctified, fitted for, and filled with life. So that this it is that doth the thing; this is it from whence Christ had his own flesh and blood (for we are taught, both by the Spirit, and by the Scriptures, to distinguish between Christ's own flesh, and that of ours which he took up and made his); which flesh and blood we feed of in the Spirit; which they cannot feed on which serve at the outward tabernacle; nor they neither which know only the outward body; but they only that feed in the Spirit.

Now of this thing we might speak yet more clearly and plainly, could men bear our words. But if we have spoken

to you earthly things (in parables and figures), suitable to your understanding, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if we speak to you heavenly things; if we should tell you plainly of the Father, in whom is all the life of the Son, and all the virtue and salvation that ever the Son had from him? The Jews were to learn in types, figures, and shadows, till Christ came. And after Christ came, he also taught them in resemblances and similitudes of things: and the apostles wrote and spake much to persons, as just coming out of that state, in a language suited to that state. But he that comes into the thing itself, and is taught there by the Spirit, after he is grown up and made capable, he is taught plainly the nature of the heavenly things, and the words of the apostles (concerning the deep things of God), which are mysterious to others, are manifest and plain to him. Yea, the Lord so teacheth him things, as words cannot utter; that is, he so knoweth the peace of God, the joy of his Spirit, the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, his wisdom, righteousness, and pure, precious ways of sanctifying the heart, the tender mercy, faithfulness, and rich love of the Father, &c. as he cannot utter to any man; nay, so as he never learned (nor could learn) from words about the things; but by the sense and experience of the thing itself, the Lord (in whom are the depths of life, and who giveth the sense and understanding of the deep things of the Spirit) opening them in him, and manifesting them to him. And indeed this is the right and excellent way of knowledge, to come into the union, to come into the thing itself; to learn in the union, to see and know in the thing. This is the way that the Lord teacheth all his children in the new covenant, by the inward life, by the pure light within, by the inward demonstration of his Spirit, by the power and virtue of the truth itself, which it hath in him that is true. And he that is in the Son, hath some measure of this life; and he that hath not some measure of this life, is not in the Son; but in a talk and wise knowledge of things after the flesh, which will perish, and he with it, who abideth there. For no man can be saved, but by coming into the

knowledge which is of a pure, eternal, living, saving nature. Can an opinion which a man takes up concerning Christ from the Scriptures (and casting himself thereupon) save him? For it is no more than an opinion or judgment unto a man, unless he be in the life and power of the thing itself. Then indeed it is truth to him, knowledge in him, right knowledge; otherwise it is but knowledge falsely so called; knowledge which will not subdue his heart to truth, nor hath i s seat there; but in his head, making him wise and able there to oppose truth, and so bringing him into a state of condemnation, wrath, and misery, beyond the heathen, and making him harder to be wrought upon by the light and power of the truth, than the very heathen. Therefore consider your ways, O professors of Christianity! and do not despise the hand which is stretched forth to you in the love of God, and in the motion and guidance of his Spirit, who condescends to you exceedingly, that he might reach to his own in you, and scatter your apprehensions, imaginations, and conceivings about the meanings of scriptures (which are as so many chains of death and darkness upon you), that ye might come to him in whom is life, and who gives life freely to all who come to him. Oh, observe what bars were in the way of the Scribes and Pharisees! They would not come to him that they might have life; nay, indeed, they could not, as they stood. There are greater bars in your way; yea, it is harder for many of you to come to him, than it was for them. My upright desire to the Lord for you is, that he would remove the stumbling-blocks out of your way, that he would batter and knock down the flesh in you, that he would strip you of all your knowledge of scriptures according to the flesh, that ye might be made by him capable of knowing and receiving things according to the Spirit, and then ye will know how to understand, honor, and make use of the letter also; but till then ye cannot but make use of it both against your own souls, and against Christ and his truth.

And then for setting up a natural principle, we are further from that than ye are aware. For we were as shy of

this, and jealous that it was a natural principle, as ye can be; and started from it, divers of us, till the Lord, by his eternal power, and demonstration of his Spirit, reached our hearts, and showed us that it was the seed of the kingdom (even the root of all the spiritual life, that either we ourselves formerly, or ever any else received at any time), and gave us the sight of the things of the kingdom in it, and at length wrought that in us, and for us, by it, which never was wrought in us before, and which can be wrought by nothing else but the power of the Spirit. Now having certainly felt and known the thing in our own hearts, and having also seen the snares and nets which the enemy lays for you, whereby he keeps you from the true bread, and from the water and wine of the kingdom (even as he kept us formerly), how can we hold our peace, but witness to you (in the love and drawings of the Spirit of the Lord) of the truth, life, and power which we have felt in Jesus, though ye become our enemies therefore? Nor do we this to bring you to another opinion, or outward way (that is not our end); but that ye might feel the thing itself, and know assuredly what is the truth, in that which never was deceived itself, nor ever deceived any; nor will suffer any to be deceived who are joined to it, and abide in it. Oh! why should ye wander in the dark opinions and uncertainties of the night? why should ye not rather come to that wherein the light of the day springs, and out of which it shines? And can the natural man (who hath his eyes) be deceived about the light of the natural day? Doth he not know the light of the day, both from the lights, and also from the darkness of the night? Ten thousand times more certain and inwardly satisfied is he, who is born of the spiritual day, brought forth in the light thereof, and who spiritually sees, lives, and walks therein. So that there is no doubt in him who is grown up into the thing; but he hath the assurance of faith (which is far above the assurance of outward sense or reason), and the assurance of understanding. Oh! blessed is he who hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, a heart to understand, the things which God hath revealed by his

Spirit in this our day, the living way which he hath now made manifest, the principle of life that he hath raised out of the grave of death. But he that reproacheth and speaketh evil of this (that will neither enter in himself, nor suffer others), he is far from receiving the blessing or blessedness of this seed; but groweth up in the wrong nature and spirit, the end whereof is to be burned, with all that is in union with it, and groweth up from it. Therefore come out from that spirit; come out of that dark mind and nature, which never saw, nor can see the truth, but setteth up opinions and appearances of things instead of it; and receive the anointing which is given with and in the seed, which is raised in some, and visited in many, in this day of the Lord's love and tender mercy; to whom the living, the sensible, the redeemed sing praises, and on whom they wait, for the further manifesting of his power and glory in them daily more and more.

Now, friends, if ye will know aright, or believe aright, ye must know and believe in him, who was with the Father before the world was; who was the Saviour, the Jesus, the Christ, from everlasting. For what makes him so? Is it not his nature? Is it not the power of salvation in him? His taking up a body made no alteration in him, added nothing to him; only it was necessary that he should take it up, to fulfill the will in it, and to offer it up a sacrifice in his own life and Spirit to the Father. This we firmly believe; and this also we cannot but say further, that the virtue, the value, the worth, the excellency of what was done by him in the body, was not of the body, but it was in him before time, in time, and will be after time, and for ever: yea, it is he to whom the name Jesus and Christ did of right belong before he took up the body: and he only put forth in the body the saving virtue which he had before, which belonged to the nature, to the anointing in him, whether ever he had saved any with it or no. And this virtue, this life, this Spirit, this nature of his, is the food, the righteousness, the garment of life and salvation, which he (through the death of the body) made and prepared a living way for the

soul to come to, to feed on, and be clothed with. I can hardly stop speaking of these things for your sakes, that through my words (or the words of whom the Lord shall please) ye might come to feel that which is able to give you the holy understanding, and might come to the true sense and experience of the truth itself, and might see who hath blinded you, and how he hath blinded you, and fed you with husks and dry food, instead of that which hath the true living sap in it. But while ye see and judge in that which is wrong, ye must needs judge amiss both of yourselves and others, and also of the truth itself, and of the words spoken, either formerly or now, concerning it, whereby ye expose and bring yourselves under the righteous judgment of the truth itself, even of the Son, and the light of his day, which hath power from the Father to judge all false appearances, deceits, and deceivers.

POSTSCRIPT.

It hath pleased the Lord, as he manifested his Christ gloriously before the apostasy, so to manifest him so again. For he was not only born (in the flesh) of the virgin Mary; but he was also born in the Spirit of the woman clothed with the Sun, which had the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She also brought forth the man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Rev. xii.

Now of this appearance and return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his fresh bringing forth of his life and power in his body, the church, there are many witnesses, who have seen, felt, and tasted thereof, with the eyes and senses which are of God, and of the new birth. And of this, in the love and good-will of God, and from the drawings and requirings of his Spirit, they bear witness to others, that they also might come to see the glory and brightness of his day, and rejoice therein. For indeed it is a glorious day inwardly in Spirit, to those that are quickened and

gathered to the living Shepherd and Bishop of the soul, by the eternal arm of his power. And happy is the eye that sees the things that they see, and the ear that hears what they hear, and the heart which understands the things which God hath revealed in and unto them by his Spirit.

Glorious was the appearance of Christ in the flesh; but there were blocks in the way of the Jews, that they could not know, own, believe, and receive him. And glorious is the administration of his life in Spirit, in this day of his power; but there are also blocks lying in the way of them to whom it is sent, which cause them to stumble at it, and keep them both from letting it into them, and also from giving up to it. But blessed was he who was not offended in Christ then, and blessed is he who is not offended at him now. For he that is offended at him, who is life, and gives life, stumbling at the present way of dispensation which God hath chosen to give it out by, how shall he live? This is the cause that so many poor hearts lie mourning and grovelling on the earth, groaning because of their sins, fearing because of the strength of the enemy, and the corruptions of their own hearts, which are continually ready to betray them into his hands; because they know not him who hath stretched out his arm, and is come in his power to deliver; but are prejudiced against the way wherein he hath and doth deliver. Yea, they know not his voice who calls, *come unto me; I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, shall receive my strength; and though he were ever so weak, shall become as David: and though ever so unclean, shall find the waters that spring from my well to cleanse him, and nourish him to life everlasting.*

How tenderly did Christ visit the Jews in the days of his flesh! How powerfully, and in the true authority of God, did he preach among them! What mighty works did he show! And yet they could not believe. Why so? The enemy had entered them with his temptations, had got somewhat into their minds of a contrary nature, to keep out thereby the sense, knowledge, and acknowledgment of him. So that when their hearts were even overcome with

his power, and sweet, precious doctrine, and ready to yield that this was he, this was the Christ indeed, then the enemy raised up some argument or other to prejudice them against him, that he might thereby beat them off, and drive them back again from owning or receiving him.

"This man is not of God," say some; "for he keepeth not the sabbath." He cannot be a prophet, say others, because "he is of Galilee, out of which no prophet ariseth." He "cannot" be Christ, saith a third sort, because "we know whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." He is not holy, strict, and zealous according to the law, say others; but a loose person, "a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners;" one who teacheth not his disciples to fast and pray, as the Pharisees did theirs, and John, who was generally looked upon as a prophet, did his, but justifieth them in plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, and so thereby rather encouraging them to break it, than strictly to observe and keep it according to God's law. He is a "blasphemer," say some (speaks most horrid blasphemy), "making himself equal with God." He reproacheth the most strict and zealous men that we have, even our teachers, and interpreters of the law and prophets, calling them "hypocrites, painted sepulchres, blind guides," &c., and pronounceth woe upon woe against them. And those that are the children of Abraham he calls the children of the devil; and saith: "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin; but if the Son (meaning himself) make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And if we will have life in us, we must believe in him, and eat his flesh, and drink his blood. (Did ever Moses, or any of the prophets teach such doctrine?) Again he saith: "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;" whereas Abraham and the prophets, who believed God, and kept his sayings, are all dead. This made them even conclude, he had a devil. John viii. 52. So how could they understand him when he said, he was "the good Shepherd, and the door," &c., and "that all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers;"

would they not look upon this as witnessing of himself, and endeavoring to set up himself? And when he said: "Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am;" were they not ready to stone him, for speaking a false and impossible thing, as it seemed to them; he manifestly being not yet fifty years old? But suppose it to be true, that he was before Abraham, how then could he be the Messiah, who was to come of Abraham, and out of the loins of David, according to the Scriptures? And then for his miracles, having beforehand concluded that he was a bad man, a sinner, a breaker of the sabbath, a blasphemer, a deceiver of the people, &c., how easy was it for them to harden themselves against them, and to infer that he wrought not these things by the power of God, but by the aid and assistance of the devil, to overthrow the laws and ordinances of Moses, and to set up himself and his new doctrine by? Indeed many (and some seemingly strong and unanswerable) were the exceptions which the wisdom and understanding in them (which was out of the life and power of truth) formed against Christ, whereby they justified themselves in their refusal of him, who was sealed and sent of the Father, and so excluded themselves the kingdom, and the righteousness thereof.

This is past, and they can condemn them now, who themselves are acting over again the same thing in spirit. It pleaseth the Lord thus to suffer things to be, still so to give forth the dispensations of his life, as they alone that are in some measure of his life can discern them. And the same spirit, under a new guise, still opposeth truth in its present appearance and dispensation, and stirreth men up to slight and blaspheme that holy name and power, which they that believe in are saved and sanctified by. Well, what shall I say to you? Oh that ye could discern spirits! Oh that ye could see what spirit ye are of, and whom ye serve, in opposing the present dispensation of life! Oh that ye could see how ye read scriptures out of that which wrote them, and bend them against that which wrote them, making yourselves wise and strong in a wrong wisdom and

knowledge against the Lord, and against his Christ, whom he hath set upon his holy hill of Zion, and who appeareth there, though you see it not. For Zion is not now literal, or after the flesh (the day is come, the shadows are gone); but Zion is the holy hill of God in Spirit, upon which the heavenly Jerusalem was built, which is revealed, come down, and coming down from heaven, and many of the heavenly citizens dwell there already, and more are coming thither to dwell; for even from the east, west, north, and south, shall the gathering be, to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom which cannot be shaken; which kingdom was received by the Christians formerly before the apostasy, and is now received again, blessed be his name who lives and reigns in power over all the spirits of darkness and deceit, maintaining his pure life and truth in the hearts of his children, in despite of them all.

But why should you thus err in heart from the pure truth? Why should you not open to him that knocks in his holy power, and in the demonstrations of his Spirit to your conscience? Why should a subtle device of the deceiver be let in and hugged by you, to cause you to thrust him back from your hearts who is the Word of eternal life, and with whom are the words of eternal life? The Lord God discover the deep deceits of the enemy to you, where he captivateth your hearts and understandings, that it may not be always said of you, as it was of the Jews: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not"! But to as many as received him, he gave power in the day of his flesh; and he giveth much more power to them that receive him in spirit (in the day of his Spirit) to become the sons of God. And because they are sons, he poureth out abundantly of his Spirit upon them; and he that hath the Spirit hath the Son; and he that hath the Son hath life: but he that hath not the Son (but blasphemeth the appearance and light of his Spirit) hath not life, but is yet in that wisdom and knowledge which is death, and which keeps him dead.

Now the Lord of his tender mercy make you sensible of, and pardon your opposing and resisting his truth; and also

cause the light of life to shine in your hearts, quickening and guiding you thereby out of the land of death and darkness, into the holy land of life; that all that sincerely breathe after truth may (through the faithful travel) come to sit down, dwell, and feed together in it, in the one power, in the one life, in the one Holy Spirit, where is pure rest and peace, perfect joy and satisfaction for evermore. Amen.

SOME QUERIES

CONCERNING

CHRIST, AND HIS APPEARANCES; HIS TAKING UPON HIM OUR FLESH: AS ALSO CONCERNING HIS FLESH AND BLOOD, AND OUR BEING FORMED THEREOF, AND FEEDING THEREON.

Query 1. WHETHER there was not a necessity of Christ's taking upon him our flesh, for the redemption of those that had sinned, and the satisfaction of the justice offended?

Query 2. Whether the Father did not accordingly prepare a body for him, to do his will in all things in; and particularly to offer up to him the acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world?

Query 3. Whether it was not necessary, in this respect also, that Christ should take upon him our flesh, that he might have experience of our temptations and infirmities, and become a merciful and faithful high-priest and intercessor for us.

Query 4. Wherein lay the value and worth of his sacrifice, and of all he did? Did it lie chiefly in the thing done, or in the life wherein he did it, in that he did it in the pure faith and obedience to the Father? He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and he, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.

Query 5. What was he, for whom the Father prepared a

body, and who took it up to do the will, and did the will in it? Was he not the arm of God, the power of God, the Saviour and salvation of God, the Jesus and Christ of God?

Query 6. To whom do the names and titles Jesus and Christ chiefly and in the first place belong? Do they belong to the body which was taken by him, or to him who took the body? The body hath its nature and properties, and the eternal Word, or Son of God (the pure, spotless Lamb, the fountain of innocency), its nature and properties. Now the query is, which was the appointed Saviour of the Father? Which was the anointed of the Father, chiefly, and in the first place? Whether the body prepared, or he for whom the body was prepared, to do the will, and offer up the acceptable sacrifice in?

Query 7. Which is Christ's flesh and blood which we are to partake of, whereof we are to be formed, which we are to eat and drink, and which is meat and drink indeed, nourishing to life everlasting? Is it the flesh and blood of the body, which was prepared for, and taken by him, wherein he tabernacled and appeared? Or is it the flesh and blood of him who took, tabernacled, and appeared in the body? For that which he took upon him was our garment, even the flesh and blood of our nature, which is of an earthly, perishing nature; but he is of an eternal nature, and his flesh and blood and bones are of his nature. Now as the life and nature which is begotten in his is spiritual, so that which feeds, and is the nourishment of it, must needs be of a spiritual and eternal nature.

Query 8. What is the bread which came down from heaven? Is not the bread and the flesh all one? Outwardly-visible flesh and blood was not in heaven, nor came down from heaven; but the bread of life did come down from heaven, which the heavenly birth feeds on and lives by. For that which redeems, that which is Jesus (the Saviour), came down from heaven, and took upon him a body of flesh here on earth, in which he manifested himself as King, Priest, and Prophet, and did the work appointed him by the Father. John xvii. 1, &c.

Query 9. What was that which saved people outwardly from their outward infirmities and diseases, while Christ was on earth in that body? Was it the body, or the life, power, and Spirit of the Father within the body, and manifest through the body? And can any thing less save inwardly? Now that which saves, that which hath the virtue and power of salvation in it,—that the eye of faith is to fix upon, and not to stick or stop in that through which the life works it.

Query 10. Who was he that humbled himself, that made himself of no reputation, that took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion, or habit, as a man? Was it the body of flesh, or was it he that was glorified of the Father before the world was? And who is to have the honor and exaltation? At whose name is every knee to bow? Is not the reward to him who laid down his glory to take upon him the body of flesh, and appear in it, that he might honor, glorify, and fulfil the will of his Father?

Query 11. Are not the children and he of one? Are not he and they of the same stock? ("Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one." Heb. ii. 11.) Is it not from thence that he is not ashamed to call them brethren, even because he finds the nature, Spirit, and life of his Father in them? What makes a child to God? Is it not the being begotten of the Father, and born of the Spirit? And that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Now mark: have we the denomination and relation with Christ from that which is spiritual, and hath Christ himself the name from or because of the body of flesh? Nay, nay; the name Christ was from the anointing which was in the body, which ran into and filled the vessel. It is true, the body, in and by the union, partakes with him of his name; but the name belongs chiefly and most properly to the treasure in the vessel.

Query 12. What is it to put on Christ, or what is the putting on of Christ? Is it the putting on of that body of flesh? Or the putting on a belief concerning him, according to

what is said of him in scripture? Or is it not rather a putting on of his nature, his seed, his Spirit, his life, wherewith the souls of those that are born from above are clothed, as the body is with a garment?

Query 18. Who was it that said, I am the resurrection and the life? Was it not Christ? And what did he say it concerning? Did he say it concerning the body, or did he say it concerning the power and virtue of the Father which was in the body? Did he not say it concerning that which had the power of life in it before it took up the body, and had also the power of life while it was in the body? yea, and could raise up not only other bodies, but that also after it had laid it down? For after it was laid in the grave, he could raise it up, and take it on again, as well as he did at first, when it was first prepared. John x. 17, 18.

Query 14. If I, or any one else, have felt the saving arm of the Lord revealed in us; if we have felt a measure of the same life, power, and anointing revealed in our vessels as was revealed in his, is it not of the same nature? Is it not the same thing? Is not Christ the seed? And is not this seed sown in the heart? Now if this seed spring and grow up in me into a spiritual shape and form (though it be but of a babe), is not Christ then formed in me? If I be ingrafted into, and grow up in it, am I not ingrafted into Christ (the true olive-tree, the true vine), and do I not grow up in him? And is not this the same Christ that took upon him the body of flesh, and offered it without the gates of Jerusalem? Is there any more than one, or is there any other than he? Is Christ divided? Is there one Christ within, and another without? He that knoweth the least measure of the thing, doth he not know the thing in some measure? And he that is in the least measure of the thing, is he not in the thing? He that knoweth the Son, doth he not know the Father? And he that knoweth the Spirit, doth he not also know the Son? And he that is in the Spirit, is he not in the Son? For they are one nature and being. A man may have notions of the one, and not of the other; but their nature, their being, their life, their virtue, is insepar-

able. And as Christ said concerning the Father,—that he was in the Father, and the Father in him; and that he that saw him saw the Father; so may it not be as truly affirmed (in the true sense and understanding of life) concerning Christ, that he is in the Spirit, and the Spirit in him; and that he that seeth the Spirit seeth him; and he that seeth him seeth the Spirit? For he is the Spirit, according to that scripture, 2 Cor. iii. 17. "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." What to do? Why, to see and read within the veil, and to behold the glory of the Lord, which is revealed there; which they whom the veil was over formerly, or whom the veil is over now, have not liberty to do. Here is confusion and impossibility to man's wisdom; that Christ should be all one with the Spirit; that Christ should send the Spirit in his name, and also himself be the Spirit whom he sends. (This is a hard saying, who can bear it?) And yet this confusion to man is God's wisdom, and precious in their eye who are taught of him.

For it is one and the same Christ that was signified in types and shadows under the law, revealed in the fulness of time in that prepared body, and afterwards in Spirit. Now after he was ascended, he received the Spirit so as he had not received him before; and so having received the promise of the Father, he so dispenseth the Spirit to his brethren and disciples, as it had not been dispensed before. Indeed he comforted and refreshed his people under the law by his Holy Spirit, which was their instructor then, Neh. ix. 20. and taught them the things of God under types, shadows, and resemblances. When he came in the body, he chose out disciples, whom he taught the things of the kingdom, and was a refresher and comforter of them therein. And was not this another comforter than those had under the law? Had the Jews before ever any such comforter, as Christ was to his disciples in his bodily presence? Now when he ascends, he receives the Spirit from the Father, as the Father had promised him; and having so received him, he sends him to them for their comforter. And may not

this justly be termed another comforter than Christ was in his bodily presence? And yet is it not also the same Spirit of life, that had been with them in that body? So that it is another in the way of administration, but the same in substance; even the Word which was from the beginning, the Spirit which was from everlasting; and to everlasting there is no other.

Now as the Father sent the Son, and yet was with and in the Son, so the Son sending the Spirit, he also is with and in the Spirit. And as it is the Father's will, that the same honor be given to the Son as is given to him; so it is the Son's pleasure, that the same honor be given to his Spirit as is given to him. Yea, as he that will worship the Father, must worship the Son, must come to him in the Son, must appear before him in the Son, must reverence and kiss the Son; so he that will come to Christ, will worship him, must come to him in the Spirit, must bow to him in the Spirit. Yea, he that will know and worship Christ in his fulness (in the majesty of his glory, dominion, and power), must learn to bow at the lowest appearance of his light and Spirit, even at the very feet of Jesus; for that is the lowest part of the body.

Query 15. Did not the bridegroom go away, as to his appearance in flesh, that he might come again in Spirit? Did not the apostles, who knew his appearance in flesh, and his tabernacling among them, know also afterwards his appearance in Spirit, and his tabernacling in them? And were not their hearts filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, because of the presence of the bridegroom? Did they not know the man-child born and brought forth in Spirit, as really as ever he was born and brought forth in flesh? Yea, did they not travail and help to bring him forth? Were there not many in that day, who could say concerning the spiritual and inward appearance of the bridegroom: We know that the Son of God, the eternal life, the pure power and wisdom of the Father is come? Did they not receive from him the understanding which he gives in and by his coming? Yea, were they not in him that is true,

even in Jesus Christ the Son, who is the true God, and life eternal? 1 John v. 20. Had they not received the kingdom which could not be shaken? And did they never see and converse with the King in the kingdom? Nay, did not he walk in them, and they in him, and he sup with them, and they with him, in the kingdom? Oh that ye could read in Spirit! Oh that ye did receive that measure of life from Christ, which the Father hath allotted you, that ye might read therein! but the letter, read out of the Spirit, darkeneth and killeth.

Query 16. What is the laver of regeneration, or the water wherewith the *soul* is washed, and whereof a man is born again? Is it outward or inward? Is it the water which ran out of the side of the natural body, when it was pierced with a spear? Or the water which springs from the fountain of life, the water which floweth from the Spirit? What are the waters which corrupt, mud, and defile the mind? Are they outward waters? And what are the waters which purify and cleanse it? Can they be of a lower nature than spiritual? What are the waters which answer the thirst of the soul after life, after purity, after salvation; that refresh and glad the heart of him that drinketh thereof? Are they not from the pure river, clear as crystal, which runs from the throne? And if the water which cleanseth and nourisheth the *soul* be spiritual; can the flesh and blood (which falleth not short of the water in its virtues, properties, and operations) be inferior to it in nature and kind?

Query 17. Can outward blood cleanse the conscience? Ye that are spiritual consider. Can outward water wash the *soul* clean? Ye that have ever felt the blood of sprinkling from the Lord upon your consciences, and your consciences cleansed thereby; did ye ever feel it to be outward? It is one thing what a man apprehends (in the way of notion) from the letter concerning the things of God, and another thing what a man feels in Spirit.

Query 18. Seeing the apostle speaks of purifying the heavenly things themselves, Heb. ix. 23. it would seriously be inquired into, and the Lord waited on, to know what

nature these sacrifices must be of, which cleanse the heavenly things? Whether they must not of necessity be heavenly? If so, then whether was it the flesh and blood of the veil, or the flesh and blood within the veil? Whether was it the flesh and blood of the outward, earthly nature, or the flesh and blood of the inward, spiritual nature? Whether was it the flesh and blood which Christ took of the first Adam's nature, or the flesh and blood of the second Adam's nature?

Query 19. What is that, wherein they that are in the Spirit, behold as in a glass, with open face, the glory of the Lord? Is it not Christ? And how is Christ so? Is it not as he is made manifest in Spirit? Doth he know Christ aright, or believe in him aright, that knoweth him according to his bodily appearance (that can relate, and firmly believe, what he did therein), or he that knoweth and believeth in his Spirit and power? Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; no, not Christ, saith the apostle, though we have known him so. What meaneth that? The same thing may be known several ways: outwardly, inwardly; according to the *flesh*, according to the *Spirit*. Now, if ye are of the Spirit, live in the Spirit; if ye live in the Spirit, know in the Spirit the things of God after the Spirit, as the Spirit reveals, as that which is born of God receives; and not as the wisdom, understanding, reason, and flesh of man can receive; and then ye will come into fellowship with Christ, both in his death and resurrection, and know indeed the resurrection both of the life and of the body: which to know, and be able to acknowledge in Jesus, is very precious.

Query 20. Hath not Christ made us kings and priests to God, even his Father? What is it that is the king and priest in us? And if we be priests, must we not have somewhat to offer? What have we to offer? And what makes our sacrifices savory and acceptable? Is it not that of his Spirit, that of his life, which is in them? Is it not the faith, the love, the obedience, which are all of him, wherein they are offered? If we should give our bodies to

be burned (in the way of testifying to truth), without this would they be accepted? If we give but a cup of cold water in this, is it not accepted?

Now, is the life, the faith, the obedience of the Son, the thing which is of value in us? And was it not the same which was of value in him? What did the Father require of the Son, for satisfaction for Adam's disobedience? Was it not the obedience of the second Adam, which weighed down the transgression and disobedience of the first? Doth not this make all righteous (who are of him, and found in his nature), as the transgression of the first made all unrighteous? Rom. v. 19. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! (He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.) By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. x. 9. 10. What can be plainer to that which hath truth's ear? So by truth manifested in the heart, there is nothing denied of what is said concerning Christ in scripture, but every thing owned, believed, and received in its proper place.

Query 21. Who is the Captain of our salvation? Who is it that girdeth himself with might, riding on conquering and to conquer all the enemies of the soul? Is it not the Lamb? Is it not Christ? Is it not he whose name is called the *Word of God?* And yet how can it be he? Is not he to sit at God's right hand, until his enemies be made his footstool?

Query 22. What is the water and Spirit, whereof a man must be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God? Is it Christ's flesh and blood, or no? His flesh saw no corruption; and incorruptible flesh and blood may enter the kingdom, though corruptible cannot.

Query 23. What did all the types, veils, and shadows under the law signify? Did they signify another veil? Did they signify or shadow out that which was outward? Or did they shadow out and signify that inward life, virtue, and saving power, which was the substance of all?

Query 24. Is not the substance, the life, the anointing,

called Christ, wherever it is found? Doth not the name belong to the whole body (and every member in the body) as well as to the head? Are they not all of one; yea, all one in the anointing? Was not this the great desire of his heart to the Father, that they all might be one, even as the Father and Christ were one. John xvii. 21, 23. And so being one in the same Spirit (one in the same life, one in the same divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. even partakers of God's holiness. Heb. xii. 10.), Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. ii. 11. nor is the apostle ashamed to give them the name *Christ* together with him. 1 Cor. xii. 12. The body is the same with the head; one and the same in nature; and doth not the name belong to the nature in the whole? So that the name is not given to the vessel, but to the nature, to the heavenly treasure, to that which is of him in the vessel, to that which the Lord from heaven begets in his own image and likeness, of his own substance, of his own seed, of his own Spirit and pure life.

Query 25. What was that live coal from the altar, whereby the prophet Isaiah's iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged? Isa. vi. 6, 7. Can any thing purge away sin, but the blood of Christ?

Query 26. What are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations? Is not Christ the tree of life? Is there any other tree of life besides him? Is there any other healer? And what do these leaves of the tree of life heal the nations of? Do they not heal them of their sins, and of the sicknesses and distempers of their souls because of their sins? And have these leaves any of the blood of Christ in them, or no?

Query 27. Is not Christ the true vine, the true olive-tree; the living vine, the living olive-tree; the spiritual vine, the spiritual olive-tree; into which all the spiritually-living are ingrafted? As the Father is the husbandman; so is not the Son the vine? And hath not this spiritual, this eternal vine in it juice and sap of an eternal nature? And is not this sap its blood?

Query 28. Is there not a choice vine, to which the foal

and ass's colt of the seed of Judah is tied? And are not the garments and clothes of the true Jews washed in the wine, and in the blood of the grapes of this vine? Gen. xlix. 11.

Query 29. What is that which the earthly nature slays? And what is the blood which the earthly nature shall disclose, and the slain which it shall no more cover?

Query 30. What are the robes which are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? And how are they washed and made white therein? And what is the blood (of what nature, earthly or spiritual?) wherein they are washed and made white?

Query 31. What is it to have, or how come we to have, fellowship with Christ in his death, and to suffer and be crucified with him? Is it by having our natural bodies crucified on the same cross of wood (or some such like one) as his body was crucified on, or by having the fleshly nature crucified, subdued, and worn out of our souls, minds, spirits, &c., by the power of the Spirit? Rom. viii. 13. Now if the flesh we are to put off be of such a nature and kind; to wit, inwardly and spiritually corrupt; must not the flesh of Christ, which we are to put on instead thereof, be of as deep, inward, and spiritual a nature? What is the flesh whereof we are to be unclothed, before we can be clothed with Christ? is it outward or bodily? And what is Christ's flesh we are to put on? is that any more outward or bodily than that which we are to put off?

Query 32. Is not the flesh and blood, which they that have eternal life feed on, and which nourisheth them up to life eternal (they continuing to feed thereon, and not feeding afterwards on strange flesh, and strange blood),—I say, is not this flesh and blood Spirit and life? For that is it which profiteth. John vi. 63. Is it not the flesh and blood of the Word? Was not the Word made flesh? And did not the Word, who was made flesh, dwell and appear in a tabernacle of flesh, and cause the glory of his own divine flesh to shine through that earthly flesh? Oh! read and consider, that ye who have stumbled and murmured against

the truth may stumble or murmur no more, but now at length receive the pure and precious doctrine thereof (and so come to witness the fulfilling of that promise, Isa. xxix. 18.--24.) and praise him who giveth understanding.

Query 33. Is not the true church flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone? Is not the false, or antichristian church, flesh of antichrist's flesh, and bone of antichrist's bone? What is the flesh of the spiritual whore, which is to be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Shall ever the church which is of Christ's flesh be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Nay, doth not his flesh make able to abide the devouring fire, and to dwell with the everlasting burnings?

Query 34. What is the pure milk of the word, which is milked out to the babes from the pure breast? And what is the breast from which it is milked out? Is it of the flesh of Christ, or no?

Query 35. Are not the wicked of the seed and flesh of the serpent? Is not that the body of flesh, of sin, of death, which is to be put off? And are not they who are renewed in spirit, of the seed and flesh of Christ? Is not that the body or garment of holiness, of righteousness, of life, which is to be put on?

Query 36. Is it not as necessary that the eternal word be made flesh inwardly, that so the children may feed on him, as it was for him to take on him an outward body of flesh, to suffer and die for them, and to fulfil all righteousness, both of the law of the letter, and of the law of the Spirit in?

Query 37. Is there not that which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt? And do not they which dwell there, in- [illegible] of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, put [illegible] to pain, crucifying it in and to themselves, trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of [illegible] an unholy thing? Read the figure. Did not [illegible] of Israel suffer in outward Egypt? Did not just Lot [illegible] in Sodom? Doth not the spiritual seed suffer in and

by spiritual Egypt? Doth not the flesh of the holy and just One suffer in and by spiritual Sodom?

Query 38. What is that which the Gentile-Christians, who are not Jews inward, circumcised in heart and spirit, who know not the inward temple (the place of the true Jews' worship, where they worship the Father in Spirit and truth), but only worship in the outward court, which God hath cast off, and left out of his measure, Rev. xi. 2.—I say, what is that holy city which these Gentiles tread under foot forty-two months? Is it the church which is of the flesh and bones of Christ, or no?

He that knoweth the substance, the seed of the kingdom, the birth of the Spirit, knoweth the flesh and blood which is of the seed. And this flesh is flesh indeed, this blood is blood indeed, even the flesh and blood of the seed's nature; but the other was but the flesh and blood of our nature, which he honored in taking upon him, in which he did the will, in which he offered up the acceptable sacrifice; but yet did not give the honor from his own flesh and blood to it. For the flesh and blood of our nature was not his own naturally, but only as he pleased to take it upon him and make it his. But that whereof he formeth us, and which he giveth us to eat and drink, is the flesh and blood of his own nature; and this was it wherein was the virtue, and wherein is the virtue, life, and power for ever. Happy, oh happy is he who is of it, who is taken out of and formed of him (as Eve was of Adam), and so becomes flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone! Then will he know the mystery of life, feed on the thing itself, and not stumble about appearances and expressions, as those that are out of and from the thing itself do, through the darkness of their mind, and because of their ignorance of the thing spoken of in the Scriptures.

An Incitation to Professors seriously to consider, whether they or we fail in the true acknowledgment and owning of the Christ which died at Jerusalem.

We who are commonly called Quakers, being a people whom the Lord hath gathered (out of the wanderings, out of the many professions, out of the several scattered estates and conditions, wherein his eye pitied us, and his love found us out) into a measure of the eternal rest; where we have found that life, that power, that manifestation of the eternal Spirit, and that redeeming virtue, which we never were before distinctly acquainted with;—I say, having tasted of this, having known this, having felt this, and come to a real enjoyment of it, in some degree, in our several measures, we could not possibly conceal this treasure, but in bowels of love (and in the movings of the life and power of the Spirit) have been drawn to testify of it to them who are left behind, grovelling under the burden of corruption, and crying out because of the sin and bondage from the powers of darkness, who have in a mist withheld their eyes from beholding that living virtue, which is able to save (and doth save, blessed be his name!) therefrom.

Now this we have often found: That this our testimony hath not been received in the same Spirit and love wherein it hath gone forth; but the enemy, by his subtlety, hath raised up jealousies concerning us, and prejudices against us, as if we denied the Scriptures and ordinances of God, and that Christ that died at Jerusalem; professing him only in words (to win upon others by), but denying him in reality and substance.

To clear this latter (for my heart is only at this present drawn out concerning that), we have solemnly professed, in the sight of the Lord God (who hath given us the knowledge of his Son in life and power), these two things.

First, That we do really in our hearts own that Christ,

who came in the fulness of time, in that prepared body, to do the Father's will (his coming into the world, doctrine, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, &c.) in plainness and simplicity of heart, according as it is expressed in the letter of the Scriptures.

Secondly, That we own no other Christ than that, nor hold forth no other thing for Christ, but him who then appeared, and was made manifest in flesh.

Now it would be nakedly inquired into by professors, what is the reason that their jealousies still remain concerning us, and why they are still so ready to cast this upon us. Certainly if they did know and own the same thing with us (in the Spirit, and in the power, in the life, and in the love, which is of the truth), this prejudice and these hard thoughts could not remain. But if they themselves do not know Christ in the Spirit (but only according to a relation of the letter), no marvel though they miss both of the Spirit, and of the true intent and meaning of the letter; and likewise be liable to clash against the truth, as it is made manifest in others.

And indeed the Lord hath shown me in Spirit several times, that they themselves are guilty of that very charge (and that he will so implead them at his judgment-seat) which they cast upon us, even of denying that Christ which died at Jerusalem to be the Christ. For he that owneth the words of scripture, as he apprehends or conceives them in the reasonings of his mind, and doth not wait to have them revealed in the Spirit, keeping out of his own reasonings and conceivings, and waiting patiently till the Lord open the thing in the Spirit, he setteth up his own conceivings, or an image in his mind, of the mind of the Spirit, but misseth of the thing itself, which alone is known in the Spirit, by them who wait upon the Spirit, there to receive it, and are not hasty to set up their own reasonings and imaginations concerning the thing in the mean time.

No man can in truth call Jesus the Lord, but by the Spirit. But any man that is any thing serious, and weighs the Scriptures in the natural part, may so learn to acknowl-

edge his coming into the world, and that he is Lord and King, &c., and may thus call him Lord, yea, and kindle a great heat in his affections towards him; but all this (out of the life, out of the Spirit) is but man's image, which he forms in his mind, in his reading the Scriptures, and observing things therefrom. But the true calling Jesus Lord is from the feeling of his eternal virtue in the Spirit, and finding the Scriptures opened to him by the Spirit, in a principle which is above the reason, comprehends the reason, and confounds and brings it to nothing.

Again; there is no true knowledge of Christ, no living knowledge, no saving knowledge, no knowledge which hath the eternal virtue in it, but that which is received and retained in a measure of light given by God to the creature, in the faith which is the gift, in the grace which is supernatural and spiritual; whereas the reasoning part is but natural. And such as have received the spiritual understanding know it to be distinct from the natural; and we experimentally find a very clear distinction, between scriptures searched out by the reasonings of the mind (and so practices drawn therefrom), and scriptures opened by the Spirit, and felt in the life.

Now that professors generally have not received their knowledge of Christ from the Spirit, or from scriptures opened in the Spirit (and so know not the thing, but only such a relation of the thing as man's reasoning part may drink in from the letter of the Scriptures), is manifest by this, in that they are not able in spirit and understanding to distinguish the thing itself from the garment wherewith it was clothed, though the Scriptures be very express therein. Speak of Christ according to a relation of the letter, there they can say somewhat; but come to the substance, come to the spirit of the thing, come to the thing itself, there they stutter and stammer, and show plainly that they know not what it is.

Now the Scriptures do expressly distinguish between Christ and the garment which he wore; between him that came, and the body in which he came; between the sub-

stance which was veiled, and the veil which veiled it. "Lo! I come; a body hast thou prepared me." There is plainly he, and the body in which he came. There was the outward vessel, and the inward life. This we certainly know, and can never call the bodily garment Christ, but that which appeared and dwelt in the body. Now if ye indeed know the Christ of God, tell us plainly what that is which appeared in the body,—whether that was not the Christ before it took up the body, after it took up the body, and for ever.

And then their confining of Christ to that body, plainly manifesteth that they want the knowledge of him in Spirit. For Christ is the Son of the Father; he is the infinite eternal Being, one with the Father, and with the Spirit, and cannot be divided from either; cannot be anywhere where they are not, nor can be excluded from any place where they are. He may take up a body, and appear in it; but cannot be confined to be nowhere else but there; no not at the very time while he is there. Christ, while he was here on earth, yet was not excluded from being in heaven with the Father at the very same time; as he himself said concerning himself, "The Son of man which is in heaven." John iii. 13. Nor was the Father excluded from being with him in the body; but the Father was in him, and he in the Father: whereupon he said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." What! did every one that saw that body, see the Father also? Nay, not so; but he that saw Christ, the Son of the living God, whom flesh and blood revealed not, but the Father only (Mat. xvi. 16, 17.), he saw the Father also.

O friends! look to your knowledge of Christ, and to your faith and knowledge of the Scriptures, and to your prayers also; for it is easy missing of the living substance in all these, and meeting with a shadow; which may please, and make a great show in the earthly part, in the natural understanding and affections, but satisfieth not the soul, or that which is born after the Spirit, but still the cry goes out (where the soul is awakened) after truth, substance, life,

virtue from God's Spirit in the spirit which it alone can feed upon.

These four things following I am certain of; which he that cometh into the true light, shall infallibly experience them there.

First, That nothing can save but the knowledge of Christ, even of that very Christ, and no other, who took upon him the prepared body, and offered it up at Jerusalem.

Secondly, That no knowledge of Christ can save but the living knowledge. Not a knowledge of him after the letter (which the carnal part may get much of, and value itself much by), but a knowledge of him in the Spirit; which is only given to that which is begotten and born of the Spirit, and only retained by that which abides and remains in the Spirit, and runs not out into the fleshly reasonings, imaginings, and conceivings, about the things mentioned in the Scriptures.

Thirdly, That that man who knoweth not Christ in Spirit, nor keepeth close to him in spirit; but (through darkness and misguidance of the spirit of deceit) calleth the shinings of his light (his reproofs, his checks for that which is evil, and his secret motions to that which is good) natural; this man, though he seem to own Christ ever so much according to the letter, yet in truth denies him.

Fourthly, He that denies Christ, in his knockings and visitations of him in his own heart, and before men in the truths which he holds forth by his servants and ministers of his Spirit, him will he deny before his Father in heaven.

Oh! I beseech you do not trifle about these things (for they are exceeding weighty), lest ye perish from the way! For missing of the Saviour, ye must needs also miss of the salvation. Oh that ye knew your state, as God knows it to be, and as it is certainly known and felt, in the measure of his life and Holy Spirit, by those which God hath gathered thither, and whose eyes he hath opened, and preserveth open there! glory be to his name therefor: yea, glory, glory, glory, and everlasting praises be sung to him throughout all the holy land; yea, in the very heights of Zion, by the

souls of the redeemed, from henceforth and for evermore, amen: whose mercy, love, grace, wisdom, power, and rich goodness remaineth and endureth for ever; by and in which the redeemed lived to his praise, who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, whose blood they know what it is, and none else knoweth it, but they who feel the sprinkling and virtue of it. Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and how can we but be glad, and rejoice in his salvation! Oh! let all that live by the breath of thy power, and drink of thy streams, sing praise unto thee, and exalt thy great and wonderful name for ever and ever!

Some Propositions and Considerations concerning the Nature of Church Worships and Ordinances since the days of the Apostles, for the sake of the simplicity which hath been long held captive therein.

He that would know the true state of the church, and ordinances thereof, must wait upon God in fear and humility of heart, who alone is able to give the true knowledge and understanding of these things. And he that cometh to the Spirit, waiteth in the Spirit, and receiveth the true light from the Spirit, he shall be able to measure ages and generations past as with a span, and see clearly, in that light, how things were before the apostasy, how while the church was in the wilderness, and how things shall be again after the apostasy, when the church cometh out of the wilderness. She herself is the same in all; but her state is different, according to the wisdom and good pleasure of him who variously disposeth of her. One while she is clothed, appearing in the beauty and glorious dress which the Lord had put upon her. Another while she is stripped of her outward garments, and the harlot dressed therewith, and appearing therein. After which season she is adorned again as gloriously (if not more gloriously) than before; but whether ever she appears more in those garments

wherein the harlot had been dressed, and wherein she had long appeared (even all the time of the apostasy), the Lord would be inquired of, and waited on to know. Now to help the tender and upright hearts towards the true sense of these things, the Propositions and Considerations following are given forth, which he that sincerely waiteth on the Lord, from him may receive the true understanding and right acknowledgment of.

1. That upon the coming of Christ, and the change of that outward covenant, the distinction between the outward Jew and Gentile fell, they becoming all one, as in relation to Christ; and then another distinction arose in relation to the faith, believers becoming Jews now, and unbelievers Gentiles.

2. That these true and inward Jews had not only the inward faith, the life, the power, the Spirit; but also a ministry, ordinances, and gifts of the Spirit relating to their present state.

3. That there was a time, after a long and sharp fight between the true ministers, who appeared in the true light and power of the true Spirit, and the false ministers, who also appeared as ministers of righteousness, and as in the power of the Spirit, but were not such indeed, but instructed by Satan to transform themselves into a resemblance and likeness of ministers of righteousness: for though they said they were apostles, and seemed so in appearance; yet their spirit, being tried, was found not to be the Spirit of the apostles:— I say, there was a time, when there was a division (or separation) made, between the inward temple and the outward court.

4. That when this division was made, the outward court was given to the Gentiles; not any longer reserved by God for the true worshippers, who worship in Spirit and truth; but given to the unbelievers, the worshippers out of the true faith, the worshippers out of the Spirit, and out of the life.

5. That henceforward, since this separation, the believers, or true Jews, are not to be expected in the outward court, in the worship thereof, wherein they were found before this

separation, but the unbelievers, the Gentiles, who have not the true nature, but at best but the appearance of the Jew, are to be expected there, and the true Jew is to be looked for and found more inward.

6. That, therefore, which allureth to look for God there, and to wait for him in the ways and worships of this time of the separation, is not the true Spirit (which rightly guideth the simple heart to the place where God appears, and where he is to be waited for), but the wrong spirit, who, when he cannot stifle the simplicity, and hinder it from breathing and seeking after God, waits to draw aside and mislead it.

7. That the great way of that spirit's misguiding and misleading the honest heart, in its breathing and longing state, is not by a direct taking it off from seeking after God; but rather by pointing it to a way to seek him in, wherein he once appeared and was enjoyed, but is now withdrawn from.

8. He that will keep close to God, and not be withdrawn from him, must watch to his Spirit, and know the leadings of it, else he will not follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; but stay behind in some observation or practice which the Lamb is gone out of; and so miss of his leader, and meet, instead thereof, with another leader, even the spirit of antichrist, who enters into the outward court, and outward practices, so soon as ever the Spirit of God hath left them.

9. That God's people, since his withdrawing inward, and giving the outward court to the Gentiles, have been much deceived by the antichristian spirit, and led captive into Babylon; insomuch as God, when he cometh to overthrow antichrist, with the Babylon of his building, finds them there, and calls them out from thence. For the light growing low, and the deceit great, and the spirit subtle; how can the poor, weak, innocent babe espy that spirit, and escape his snares, when he tempts to those very paths and ways of worship wherein the saints had walked, and met

with God, before the Spirit of the Lord departed out of them, and gave them up to the Gentiles?

10. That there is danger to the people of God of not understanding his call out of Babylon, but abiding there, through the subtle entanglements of the false spirit, who bewitcheth with the cup of fornication, to make Babylon appear as Zion, her doctrines as the truths of the gospel, her ordinances and ways of worship as the true ordinances and ways of worship. For the deceit is exceeding deep, and the mystery of iniquity very great, following the heart close which the Lord is drawing to depart therefrom; and if the Lord God is not strong and vigilant, who judgeth the whore, she would still keep her hold of the heart; and if the heart be not kept very close to the Lord in the judgment, it cannot come out of Babylon, but will still be entangled and held in some part or other of the mystery of its deceit.

11. Such of the people of God as do not wait to understand and receive the full call, and so do not follow the Lord perfectly out of that city of abominations; but by her subtleties, and inward and outward witchcrafts, are held captive therein, and found in any part thereof, when the Lord cometh to judge her; such must partake of the plagues from the hand of the Lord, who will not spare her, nor the spirits of his dearest people who are found there, in the day of his visitation and righteous judgments.

Therefore come out of her, come out of her, O ye that love your souls, and the pure presence and fresh light of God's countenance! Ye that know what it is to provoke him to jealousy, and fear the weight of his hand upon your spirits; ye that love the holy land, the holy city, and temple of the living God, oh! come out of that impure building, that fleshly building, those fleshly ways and worships, which that spirit adorneth, to make them appear as if they were spiritual. Oh! depart ye, depart ye, out of your new removes; for they are also polluted, and not your rest; but short of that wherein the rest, the peace, the presence, of the Lord of life is felt by others, and to be found by you.

And consider this, if ever ye will come to the holy city, which was once built in the days of the apostles, but, since the division of it from the outward court, hath been trodden down, and trampled under the feet of the unbelievers, even while they have been worshipping in the outward court (which God once built and chose, but afterwards withdrew his Spirit from, and gave up to the unbelievers),—I say, if ever you will come to this holy city, the holy land wherein it is built, and the holy hill whereon it was founded, ye must pass through the wilderness, be exercised in the wilderness, even till ye are fitted for it; and not strive to raise up a building yourselves in the likeness of it; but wait till God hath hewn and prepared the stones by his Spirit, and then, by the skill of the Spirit, build up his Zion again.

Therefore, in the fear of the Lord, consider seriously, meekly, humbly, and brokenly, that the Lord may manifest your present state and condition unto you, whether ye have not erred in these things as well as others, and have not cause to repent of your forwardness herein, and to acknowledge that your buildings have been raised in the forwardness of your own spirits, and in the confidence of your reasoning upon scripture words, without feeling the presence (guidance and holy power) of God's Spirit raising up the foundation of many generations, and rearing his own pure house upon his own holy mountain.

In the Lord's hand is the time and season of building his own house. David, though his desire was approved, yet might not build the outward temple in the time of his choice; but God's time and season was to be waited for, both for the first building, and for the rebuilding of it. There is likewise a season for the rebuilding of spiritual Zion, after the long captivity of it in mystery Babylon. Now he that is forward, building before the time and season of the Spirit, buildeth without the Spirit, and his building is not of the Spirit, but of the nature of Babylon, which is wholly to be departed from, and left behind, in the soul's travel and progress towards Zion: and whatever is of the

nature of Babylon must at length fall with Babylon, in the day of her terrible judgment, if the Lord in mercy do not shake it, and cause it to fall before.

Therefore, O all professors! awake out of the flesh, and all fleshly reasonings, into the Spirit of life; and examine there both your inward and outward buildings, that your loss be not great, and your anguish unutterable, in the day of the Lord, when all those buildings, which are raised and preserved in the pure life and power, shall shine in the beauty and glory of God's Spirit, and the greatest glory of flesh and fleshly buildings fade and wither.

The Sounding of Bowels towards thee, O England!

Early in the morning, on the 26th day of the Sixth month, 1660, this, in the freshness and quick sense of life, sprang up in my heart again and again: O England, England, England! how good had it been for thee, that thou hadst known and walked in the way of peace!

There is a way of peace for persons and nations to know and walk in; but every person and nation doth not know and walk in this way, but rather in the way of trouble.

Quest. What is the way of peace?

Ans. It is the way of the pure wisdom, the way of the light and guidance of God's Spirit, from whom the creature came, and by whom alone it can be rightly ordered. He that waiteth on him for counsel, he that subjecteth to, and walketh in, his counsel, he walketh in the way of peace.

Quest. What is the way of trouble?

Ans. The way of man's own wisdom and counsel. For a man or nation to do that which is right in their own eyes. This is the way of man, whereby he thinks to establish himself, and put an end to his troubles; but he errs therein, as in the end he still finds to his woe.

Now, O England! consider; hast thou the guidance of God? Hath the light which hath guided thy steps been lighted by him, or by his and thy soul's enemy? For there

is a spirit, of a contrary nature to God, near man, which he suddenly taketh counsel of, when his heart is not acquainted with, nor receiveth counsel of, the Lord. And this counsellor is the destroyer both of persons and nations, leading them in ways of ruin and subversion, under an appearance of being the proper ways of peace and settlement.

It is true of nations as well as persons, that what they sow, that shall they also reap. God measureth out their time unto them, and when that is over, his time of judging and pleading with them comes. And woe is then unto them who have acted in their own wills and wisdoms, out of the pure counsel and fear of the Lord, wherein they should have stood and been guided.

It is a day of trouble and distress. The weight of the iniquity of this nation begins to be felt upon it. Oh, let every one search and bow before the Lord, under his righteous judgments! that there may be no going on in that which bringeth and will increase the judgment; but a turning towards that which intercedes, and opens the springs of mercy.

Two things lie heavy on this nation; to wit, a running on in transgressions of several kinds against the Lord (forgetting his tender mercies, with the days of former distress), and an afflicting others whom he loves, and hath led, and is leading out of transgression. Oh that these things might come to an end! that the anger of the Lord might cease, and the ways of his judgments and pleading with this nation be stopped; for who can stand before him when he riseth up in controversy against them?

There is but one eye which can rightly see the hand and judgments of the Lord; yea, it pleaseth the Lord so to manage them, that only the eye which is of him may see them. Man must be taken in his wisdom, and caught in the snare of his own understanding. He that will see the things of God, the ways of God, the counsels of God, the love and sweetness of God (yea, the very judgments of God), must receive from him the eye that seeth them. Oh that men might feel after, and come into, that wherein they might be

pitied, and spared by their Maker. Man must bow; that which is of God in man (which hath long lain under oppression) must be exalted. It is the day of his power, and he will reign in it. Oh! happy they that bow to his sceptre, and kiss the shinings of his light (even the sharpest rebukes of it in their hearts), that they may turn from, and travel out of, the darkness (where is death, destruction, and misery, even in all the counsels and ways of it), and come into unity with that which is pure, and live.

Written in Aylesbury prison,
27th of 6th month, 1666.

A FAITHFUL GUIDANCE TO THE PRINCIPLE AND PATH OF TRUTH, WHEREIN ETERNAL LIFE IS WITNESSED, BY THOSE WHO ARE BORN THEREOF, AND WALK THEREIN.

THERE must be somewhat let down from God into a man's heart, to change his heart, and redeem it to God, or he cannot be saved. He must receive a seed, be born of a new and incorruptible seed, or he cannot be renewed from his corrupt nature and state. He must be born of water and God's Spirit, or he cannot enter into God's kingdom.

Now this is the true religion; namely, to experience and be subject to that power which redeems to God; which breaks the power of the wicked one in the heart, first casting him out, and then taking possession of the vessel, and filling it with the holy treasure.

Quest. But how may a man meet with such a thing as this?

Ans. The scripture, which gives a faithful testimony concerning the truth, saith, Christ, the Word of faith, which the apostles preached, is nigh. Insomuch as a man need not say: Who shall go up or down to fetch it? But what saith it? "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." This is that which reconciles to God, cutting down and slaying the enmity by the power of the cross, and bringing up the seed. This is the adversary in the way of

the sinner, which he that maketh peace with shall be remitted all his trespasses past, and find power and strength against sin for the time to come, as he is gathered into, and brought forth in, his pure life and nature.

Quest. But how shall I know and receive this?

Ans. That in the heart which is contrary to sin, which discovereth sin, which witnesseth against sin, and is drawing the mind from it, furnishing those with a new and holy ability, who wait upon the Lord in it,—that, that is the thing, though in ever so little a seed or low measure. Now he that minds this, hearkens to this, turns from what this, in its pure, unerring light, shows to be evil, follows, in the will, strength, and ability which is of this, what this shows to be good, he receives it; and waiting upon it, and becoming daily subject to it, shall grow up in it, increase in the knowledge of it, and acquaintance with it, and receive of it daily more and more. And thus the man whose way was vile, whose heart was naught, formed in wickedness, filled with corruption, daily bringing forth sin and fruits unto death, shall find these (by the pure light, and holy instructions of life) daily purged out of him, and Christ formed in him, and the holy fruits of righteousness brought forth through his vessel, by the power and Spirit of Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

And then being in Christ, being in the principle of his life, and acting therein, here is peace in the soul, rest to it from its enemies and God's judgments, and acceptance with the Father in what the soul thus is and works.

But then the world will persecute and hate exceedingly; because this soul, who thus submits to God, and is thus changed by him, is not of the world, but of the Father, which begat it in Christ, and formed it in his image and likeness.

Likewise in this light the eyes are opened to read the Scriptures, and to understand therein the conditions of the people and saints of the Most High in former generations, and how the wicked spirit wrought then, to oppose the truth and people of God, and to draw men into deceit,

Yea, and many other ways the Scriptures are exceeding sweet and useful, being read in that which gives the true sense and understanding of them.

But let him that once putteth his hand to the plow (beginning to feel somewhat of God, and to subject unto it, and so to taste of the peace and pureness of it) never look back to the world, nor mind the temptations and oppositions he will meet with from that nature and spirit, either in himself or others; for if he do, he will never be able to travel on, but rather consult with flesh and blood, and so return back into Egypt, and lose the crown which is laid up for those who pass on through the wilderness, through the trials, through the temptations, through the wants, through the various exercises, to their journey's end.

This is the path of life in brief: happy is he who feels the guider into it, and faithfully follows him therein to the end.

There is another question springs up in my heart, which is this:

Quest. How may a man come to have his sins washed away by the blood of Christ?

Ans. By coming into the light, and walking in the light, which discovers the blood, and wherein alone it is sprinkled by God, and felt by the soul, he may receive the cleansing which is by it. This is according to the testimony of scripture; as, 1 John i. 7. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." By the light the darkness is dispelled, and in the light the corruption and filth is washed away by the blood, and the soul (mind and conscience) cleansed from it.

"This then is the message that we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." ver. 5. What then? Why then they that will know God, and walk with God, must by the virtue of his truth be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; as, Acts xxvi. 18. and in that light he shall meet with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

Christ, and have fellowship with them, ver. 8. and shall be washed (both with the water and with the blood) and kept clean and pure thereby in the sight of God.

Quest. But how shall I come into the light, and how may I walk therein?

Ans. Christ is the light. He is the light of the world, the light of men, the light of life. And thou needst not say in thine heart: Who shall go up to heaven, or down into the deep, for him? For he is near, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. This is the word of faith, which thou art to believe in, love, and obey; that in the love, faith, and obedience thereof, thine heart may be circumcised, and thou mayest live. This is the gospel of our salvation, even this Christ, this word, this light, this life, which redeems from sin, which destroyeth the destroyer, and setteth the soul free to serve and live to the Lord. This was the message the apostles had to deliver in their day: as, Rom. x. 8. And this was Moses' message too, when he spake concerning the new covenant. For Moses did not only deliver the old covenant, but he also spake concerning the new, even another covenant than that of Mount Horeb. Deut. xxix. 1. And the word of this other covenant was not the law written in tables of stone; but the word nigh in the mouth and heart. chap. xxx. 14.

Obj. But that place speaks of doing (which is the voice of the old covenant, do this and live); but the new covenant stands in believing.

Ans. The end of faith is obedience. Why do I believe Christ, but that I may receive the law of his Spirit, and walk before him in the newness of the obedience thereof? And he that obeys is of the faith, and in the truth; and he that obeys not is out of it, is not in the power, not in the life, which brings forth the obedience, so out of the thing which redeems, and in which the redemption is witnessed; but he that obeys, he that doth the will,—he is in the righteousness, in the power, in the life, from which the obedience springs.

And here the washing and purifying of the soul is truly

known and witnessed. Outward sacrifices under the law were vain as to cleansing the soul; and an outward belief of what Christ did and suffered effects not the thing now. What then? The new creature doth; the pure faith doth; the pure obedience doth. It did it formerly, it doth it still, and nothing else can do it. "Bring no more vain oblations; but wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well," &c. But how should this be? Could they ever attain this by the old covenant? Nay; but Moses had not only delivered them the old covenant, but also had directed them to the new, to the Word of faith, to the Word of life and power in the heart and mouth, through the obedience whereof they might wash themselves (as Peter, even in the gospel times, speaketh. 1 Pet. i. 22.), put away the evil of their doings; cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c. And what then? Why, then they should receive the cleansing through the blood of the Lamb; for then, though their sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool. Isa. i. 16, 17, 18.

So Micah tells them (when they asked how they might come before God to please him): "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." Mic. vi. 8. Where or how doth God show this to man? Had not Moses told that before; to wit, by the Word nigh in the mouth and heart? There is somewhat near man, even in his mouth, which divides his words one from another, showing him (at some times, and would do it oftener if he heeded it) which are bad words, and which are good words. What is that that doth this? The same thing also is in his heart, as a discerner of the thoughts and intents thereof, showing him when there is a good thought, desire, or intention in his mind, and when there is a bad or wicked one. What is this? Oh that men knew what it is! Oh that they could fear the Lord, and become subject to it, and they should know what it is!

"Every man that will be sanctified, and inherit God's kingdom, must be born of the will of God. He must deny his own will (as Christ did; not my will, said he, Father, but thine be done), that must be crucified. He must suffer in the flesh, die to the flesh, and live in and to the holy nature and Spirit of God.

Now thus a man comes to be born of the pure will; to wit, by hearing the word nigh in the mouth and heart, and becoming subject to it. This cuts down his own will day by day, and brings up the will and nature of God in him, through which he is changed and sanctified, and becomes a new creature. For the old creature is made up of the old understanding and will; but the new creature is made up of the new.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word," said David. What word was that? Was it the word of the old covenant, or the word nigh in the mouth and heart? And "thy word," saith he, "is a lantern to my feet, and a light to my path." What word was that, the word of the first covenant, or the word of the second? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." What law is that? "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." What testimony is that? "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." What statutes are they? (Were not the statutes of the old covenant heavy and burdensome?) "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." What commandment is that? Yea, what is that which is "sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb," which overcomes with sweetness? Oh that men could read! Oh that men could see the thing which is pure, and maketh pure; which is righteous, and maketh righteous! After men have seen the thing, there is a great way to travel to it; but how far are they off, who do not so much as see it, but are in the darkness and prejudices of that nature and spirit which is contrary to it.

Now if the Lord in his tender mercy and love to thy soul, bring thee to a sense of this thing, and thou beginnest to feel this precious, searching word discovering any evil to

thee, either in thy heart or ways, oh! do not dispute, do not reason against it; but bless the discoverer, bow to the Son, become obedient immediately, faithfully following the Lamb therein, lest he remove his light from thee, and suffer darkness and the disputing wisdom to overtake thee.

Christ is not of the world, and he leads out of the world; out of its vanities, ways, customs, fashions, &c. A man cannot serve Christ and the world. Can any man be born of the Father, be begotten by him out of the spirit of the world, and yet live in that, walk in that, which is not of the Father, but of the world; which came from the worldly part, is of the worldly part, nourisheth and pleaseth the worldly part in man, but pleaseth not the Father? Can that man who is not of the world, but of the Father, do any thing that upholdeth the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, either in himself or others? Doth not the Spirit of the Lord, where it is hearkened to, draw out of these, and out of all things which are of these? Therefore consider well what it will cost, and how hard it is to follow Christ; that thou, who desirest to be the Lord's, mayest receive help and strength from him to be faithful, that in his strength thou mayest overcome all that stands between thee and life, that so thou mayest receive the crown, and inherit the kingdom which is prepared for, and given to, the faithful, who labor and fight not in vain; but gain ground and conquer (yea, at length become more than conquerors) through the mercy, love, might, and power of the Lord.

Some sensible experimental Questions and Answers from the Tenth Chapter of John.

Quest. 1. Who is the good Shepherd of the sheep?

Ans. The wisdom, life, and power of the Father (which dwelleth in, and is manifest through the Son) is the Shepherd. He that is the truth, the way, and the life, he also is the Shepherd and Bishop of the soul.

Quest. 2. Who are the sheep?

Ans. They that are born of this wisdom, gathered by this life, turned to this power, they are the sheep. They who are changed by him into his nature, they are of him; sheep of him, the Shepherd; lambs of him, the Lamb; doves of him, the Dove.

Quest. 3. What is the fold of the sheep?

Ans. The wisdom, life, and power of the Father, even the same that is the Shepherd. The Father's hand wherewith he covers them, wherein he encloseth them, that is the fold. For it is the power, wisdom, and life of the Father, which gathereth the sheep; and he gathereth them into his wisdom, into his life; and that is a wall or fold about them.

Obj. Is not the church the fold?

Ans. This in the church, or the church in this, is the fold; but not out of this. For there is no safety or preservation among any sort or gathering of people, but as they stand and abide in this. And standing and abiding in this, they have authority and power from the chief Bishop of the soul; but none out of this.

Quest. 4. Who is the door?

Ans. The Shepherd is the door also, who lets into the fold, and shuts out, at his pleasure; and none can rightly enter but by him.

Quest. 5. What are they that run before the power, or further than the power leads and guides them?

Ans. They are thieves and robbers, and they may destroy the life and freshness in those that are not watchful; but they cannot help to save or build up, because they themselves are out of that, come out of that, and act out of that, which alone can do it.

Quest. 6. How may the sheep be discerned from the goats, and from such also as put on the sheep's clothing, but are not sheep in nature and spirit?

Ans. By their lamb-like nature, by the meekness and innocency in them which is of the Lamb, which none can have but they that are of him; for it is not to be found in man's nature, nor to be attained by his art. They also know and

hear the voice of the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, and follow the law of his Spirit, received from his mouth, which none else but his sheep do, or can do; for this is given by him, and it is given by him only to his sheep.

Quest. 7. What doth Christ, the Shepherd (the eternal Word, the wisdom, life, and power of the Father), do for his sheep?

Ans. He doth great things for them, which who can utter? But happy is he that feels and knows them. He gives them a new nature, a new spirit, a new heart, a new name, which none knoweth but he that hath it; for it is written on the white stone, which none else receives, nor none else can read, but he that hath the eye which is of him, what is written thereon. He giveth them eternal life; he leadeth them into the pastures of life; he giveth them to drink of the waters of life. He putteth them forth out of the prison-house, out of the chains and fetters, out of the darkness, out of the bonds, and from under the burdens of the soul, into the pure light and liberty of the Spirit, where they taste, know, and enjoy of his freedom, and dwell with him, and rest with him, and lie down with him, and rise up with him, even in the same eternal life, spirit, and power, wherein his dwelling-place is. And all this they enjoy safely, hearkening to the voice of the Shepherd, and turning from the voice of the stranger, which it is natural to them to do. For being turned from man, born of that which is immortal, and keeping to that, that ear which is there received will alone hearken to the voice of him who is immortal; and the voice of the stranger (who speaketh of himself) is presently discerned and turned from, by him that heareth with the true ear. The Lord God, who is the spring and fountain of all good, inflame people with desires after the pure life, and holy nature, which is of and from Christ the seed, his Son, and satisfy those desires which are singly and uprightly after him.

THE CONCLUSION.

GLORIOUS was the estate of the church before the apostasy, for purity of doctrine, for holy order and discipline, for love to God, one to another, and to all men (even of enemies), for faith in God, for the presence and power of his Spirit among them (insomuch as the unbeliever coming among them, might find his heart and state reached to, and be forced to confess and report that God was in them of a truth), for singleness and uprightness of heart, meekness and innocency of spirit and conversation, for zeal for God and his truth, suffering the spoiling of their goods, imprisonments, stripes, and many other ways, both from the heathen, and also from the professing Jews, who had been the church once. Oh! what shall I say concerning the beauty and loveliness of that state? Ye that would know it, oh! wait to feel it in that which gives the true sense of it.

But over this glorious state came a dark, thick, corrupt night, wherein the kernel was lost, and the shell defaced; wherein the house, which had been swept and garnished, became again recovered and possessed by the wicked spirit. And how great hath this darkness been! Oh, what a kind of church hath appeared in the world, wherein the spirit of enmity hath dwelt and acted in men, under the name of Christianity! So that instead of loving and seeking the good of enemies, they are ready to rend and tear one another for every little difference, and will be lords over men's faith, requiring men to practise things in religion before the Spirit of the Lord teacheth them so to do, which the apostles did not. For though they had from God the express knowledge of what was truth, and could certainly instruct and build up men therein, yet they were not lords over men's faith; but if men were otherwise minded than according to what they knew and taught, they could wait and bear with them, bidding them walk so far as they had attained, and God, in his due time, would reveal the rest

also. Oh that men were come to this spirit again! then they would be Christians indeed, and then they might be known to be Christ's disciples, by their loving the brethren and fellow-disciples. But without this love, men's religion is but a tinkling cymbal, making a noise and sound of somewhat, but not having the true nature or virtue of religion in it.

Now will it not be a glorious day, when the Spirit of the Lord cleanseth away this thick darkness, and causeth the light of his pure truth to arise and appear again? Why, there is such a day to be, wherein the true church, which was reproached and driven into the wilderness, is to come out of the wilderness again, and her witnesses stand on their feet again, and her seed to spring up in the power of life, following the Lamb, who marcheth on fighting with the sword of the Spirit (the word of his mouth), conquering and to conquer thereby the corrupted antichristian world, even as he did at first the corrupt heathenish world.

The Lord will purify his temple, and cleanse the world by the plagues of his angels which he hath prepared, making way for the beauty of his truth, and the church of his gathering; wherein he will bring forth his righteousness, wherein his power shall appear, wherein his presence shall be made manifest, wherein that which shined before in the primitive church shall shine again in this new-reared building of his, insomuch as men shall be forced to say: This is the church of Christ indeed, God is here of a truth; this is the Gospel-Jerusalem indeed, which is built upon the holy hill of Zion; in which innocency, righteousness, truth, love, sweetness, peaceableness, and the gentle nature and Spirit of the Lamb lives and reigns; and the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.

Now, of a truth this work is begun. The times of refreshment are come from the presence of the Lord. The Lord hath heard from heaven, pitying the cries of his seed, and hath visited their souls, causing the light of life (even the pure light of the everlasting covenant) to shine upon their tabernacles. But whoever would know these things,

and partake of them, must come in at the door, by the guidance of the Spirit, through the light which is with him. And he that would enjoy the full light (even the shinings forth of the sun at noon-day) must begin with its glimmerings, even that in the heart which discovereth and draweth out of the corrupt state of the world towards the Father. Oh! hear and live. Do not dispute about it, but wait to feel it; upon the feeling of it, despising the shame, and taking up and enduring the cross, and so bearing the reproach and sufferings of Christ in thy age and generation. And as thou obeyest, thou shalt know of its doctrine; but out of the pure faith and obedience, there is no true, sound, deep, rooted knowledge; but all of that kind must be parted with, for the knowledge which is of the faith, and which is made manifest and increased in the obedience; which knowledge is of a far more excellent kind and nature, than that which thou art to part with for it. The Lord guide thy mind, and stretch forth his hand to help thee, who, from the least touch of a pure nature and spirit, desirest after the pure truth and way of eternal life. Amen.

This testimony, here held forth, is faithful and true, and (I know) the witness of God in many hearts will answer to it; and happy is he that maketh a right use of it. For, so doing, his soul will not fall short of the pure, living truth, nor set up any thing else for truth which is not.

TO SUCH AS ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH A PROFESSION, WITHOUT THE TRUE LIFE AND POWER, BUT HAVE SINCERE DESIRES IN THEIR HEARTS AFTER THE LORD HIMSELF, AND A WILLINGNESS TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH HIS PURE LIVING TRUTH, AND WITH THE SOUL'S TRUE GUIDE AND LEADER;

THIS EXPERIENCE IS IN MY HEART TO EXPRESS UNTO YOU, WHICH WE HAVE ALL ALONG WITNESSED IN OUR TRAVELS OUT OF THE DARK, CORRUPT LAND, INTO THE LAND OF LIFE AND PURITY.

WE have still found the willer, the runner, the self-striver, the wise, comprehending part, &c., left behind; and the grace of God alone able to lead towards him, and the birth which is of and by grace still to obtain the mercy. And Christ is our life, and in the union with his Spirit lies all our ability and strength; and that knowledge of Christ, which we witness to be life eternal, we did not meet with whilst we thought to have it in the Scriptures, but it hath been all along revealed to us by God's Spirit; so that we can truly say, flesh and blood did not reveal the Son to us, but the Father. Yet that which the Scriptures testify concerning Christ is exactly true according as it is there related, and is so acknowledged and really owned by us; though we obtain not our knowledge of Christ by the letter, but by receiving a principle of life from God; and coming into union with his Spirit, we came to the true knowledge and owning of the letter; which as it came from the life, so can it only be rightly read and understood in the life from which it came: so that he that is out of that, cannot but err concerning the letter, and misjudge concerning the things of God; whereas he that is guided by, and lives in God's Spirit (receiving his knowledge there), cannot err concerning the Spirit, or concerning the letter; but hath

that within him, which gives to him, and preserves him in, the true sense and understanding of both.

Now, friends, this is an excellent thing indeed, to come to, and be acquainted with, and receive that, which the Scriptures testify of; to wit, to receive Christ, to feel union with him in his Spirit, to enter into the new and holy agreement with God, into the everlasting covenant of life and peace, to feel the partition wall broken down, and the wall of salvation reared up, and the defence which is thereby; to find the law of God, the law of life, the law of the new creation, written in the heart; the pure fear planted there by God, which keepeth the mind and spirit from departing from him; to have his Spirit put within, causing to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and do them; and so to have union and fellowship with the Lord in that which is pure and living of him, in Christ the new and living way, which was before the fall, and leads the obedient out of the fall, even beyond Adam's state, into himself who never fell, in whom is no sin, nor erring, no, not for the wayfaring man, though a fool, who often erred and wandered before he came thither; but there the Father's hand, even the hand of eternal power, is felt, which none can pluck out of. Oh! that ye knew the infallible Leader, and were turned from darkness to light (and did believe therein), and from the power of Satan unto God, that ye, through his Spirit, might undeniably witness the mysteries of his kingdom, and partake of and enjoy that which his love, grace, and mercy, plentifully distributes among his children that wait upon him in one way, under the holy ordering of his Spirit; which was long harped at and longed after by many of us; but we could never meet with it, till the Lord in his mercy caused the light of his day to shine into our hearts, which chased away the darkness of the night, and made the things of the day manifest.

Are ye of the house of Jacob? Are ye of the right seed? Are ye of the true breathers after God's holiness, after the life and righteousness of his Zion? Oh! then come ye, know, acknowledge, receive, and wait to walk in the light of the

Lord; and do not join to that in you which is separated from, and knoweth not, the light of the Lord, but opposeth it. And, friends, I beseech you, take heed in this point; for he that denieth, refuseth, opposeth, speaketh evil, or thinketh hardly of any thing that is indeed of Christ, doth it to Christ himself, in Christ's account (that is, Christ looketh upon it as if he had denied him, refused him, opposed him, spoke evil of him, &c.), and it will be so laid to his charge in the day of the Lord. And indeed such is my love to you, and such my desire after your eternal good and welfare, that I would not have you stumble at the light and power of life, which the Lord hath revealed and stretched out (in this day of his mercy) to gather and save with; but feel the gathering by it from all that scattereth from the Lord, with the preservation which is thereby, and the effecting of that in your spirits which it is able to effect, as it comes to manifest itself unto you, and to put forth his strength in you. So wait for the gathering unto the light (the light of the everlasting day of God), and into the power which is able to redeem and defend the soul from all that is contrary to God. And when ye are there, be diligent and faithful to the Lord: and feel (oh! daily wait to feel from him) the unclothing of your spirits from all their own unrighteousness; yea, from all their own righteousness also (which is but as filthy rags before the Lord, even of the same nature with the unrighteousness), that ye may be clothed upon with the new and living garment, wherein there is neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. For they that are of Christ, and in Christ, do as really put on the nature, the Spirit, the garment of the second Adam, as ever they did put off the old garment, nature, and spirit.

This is from one who uprightly and singly desireth your union with the Lord in his pure truth and holy anointing, and your disunion from all that is contrary to him.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A Query added, with its Answer.

WHAT is the true confession of Christ, even that confession which ariseth from the knowledge which is life eternal?

Ans. Friends, I witness it to be this: A confession of his nature, a confession of his Spirit, a confession of his life, a confession of his power. To confess the present living appearance of Christ, that is to confess Christ. "Behold," saith he, "I stand at the door and knock." He that heareth his voice, acknowledgeth him, letteth him in, subjecteth to his truth and Holy Spirit,—he confesseth him. But though a man should acknowledge and confess all that is recorded in the Scriptures concerning him; yet if he know not his knocks, so as to let him in, and become subject to his power, he doth not confess Christ as he ought to do, and as God requireth of him. Oh that ye could learn thus to know Christ, and thus to confess him! For until ye thus know him, ye cannot thus confess him. And your knees must first bow at his name, before your tongues can rightly confess him, to the glory of God the Father! For if ye will indeed glorify the Father, ye must bow to the Son, who is the light wherein God dwells, in the shinings whereof he appears to, and visits the sons of men. And as the Son himself is spiritual; so is the light wherewith he visits dark man. His law is spiritual, able to convert the soul of any man in whose heart it is written, and to make wise (the most simple among men) unto salvation. For the law of God, writ in the heart, is from the covenant of life; and delivers and preserves from the law of sin and death, having the light, power, and Spirit of Christ in and with it, from whom it comes.

Now if ye will know these things clearly, certainly, and infallibly; wait to feel some touches, some drawings, some convictions of God's Spirit upon your hearts. And then dispute not against them; but immediately become subject, so far as the light and drawings of the Father incline and lead the mind; and then ye shall see what he is that draws,

and of what nature his drawings are. And if once ye come to feel the preciousness of his ointment; and to partake of it, receiving it and following it, it will bring you into the pure virginity, which loves and longs after the name that anoints with the pure living oil.

Friends, I was once where ye now are; and in that day, I also (through error and mistake) called the light wherewith Christ hath enlightened man, natural, as ye now do. But the Lord hath since showed me, that it was not the true birth of life in me which so called it; and it is also manifested to me in his Spirit of truth (which deceives not), that it is not the true birth in you, which so judges of it. Oh that ye were born of the Spirit, and in it knew the names of the things from their nature, and might be taught of the Father to worship the Son! which ye can never do, till ye come into the Son's light; and that is the Son's light, even that wherewith he hath enlightened men, that they might believe in the Father through him. The Scriptures (or any words spoken or written) are not the light itself, but testimonies concerning the light. Now that which ye are to come into, and to dwell and abide in, is the light itself; which light was before any words that testify of it, and is the substance of all the shadows, and the end of all the testimonies concerning it. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of the new creation of God. Oh that ye so knew him!

That from which the Scriptures came, is the thing, the life, the Spirit, the power itself; which is able to write inwardly, as well as outwardly. And he that knows the thing, and is led to the thing by the inward writing (which is the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy) he by the testimony of Jesus, by the Spirit of prophecy, is led to the Holy Power; which he believing in, it prevails to save him out of the contrary spirit and power. And this the Gentiles without the law, the Jews under the law, and the believers under grace, had spiritually all one and the same way and path of life unto salvation; and God will be clear and just in judging them all according thereunto, who had all some mani-

festation of the gospel and power which saves, according to the dispensation of the good pleasure of the free giver. And men's perishing in the time of every dispensation, is not for want of light and power from God, but from men's withdrawing and apostatizing from the light and power, which in every dispensation of life stretched forth its hand and arm sufficiently to gather and save.

There is one thing more in my Heart unto You, at this Time, which is

CONCERNING APPLYING THE PROMISES.

THE promises of God are great and precious, and give to partake of the divine nature those that wait upon the Lord in the faith and obedience of his truth. Now there are estates and conditions to which they do belong; and there are estates and conditions to which they do not belong: and if any one apply any promise to himself, he not being in that estate and condition to which that promise belongs, he deceives his soul, and sucks not in the true sweetness and comfort of the promise, but of his own imaginary apprehensions concerning the promise.

There is a state of wounding, of judging, of God's pleading with the soul, because of sin and transgression. Now he that breaks and wounds, he alone can bind up and heal; and the Lord is to be waited upon in the way of his judgments, until he see meet to bind up and heal. Now the Lord heals by the same Spirit and power wherewith he wounds; but it is hard to lie under the judgment, to bear the indignation of the Lord, and so keep the wound (which he makes) open, till he pour in the oil, and heal. For there is that near, which will be offering to heal before the season, and will be bringing in promises, and applying promises, otherwise than the Spirit of the Lord intendeth or applieth them. Now this is diligently to be watched against, that the hurt of the soul (judged and wounded by the Spirit of the Lord) be not healed slightly, and peace spoken to it (and an ex-

pectation and hope raised in it) which is not of the Lord. But this is the right way, even to give up to feel that which wounds, and to receive the woundings of thy soul's friend, and lie low before him in the wounded state, waiting upon him in the way of his judgments and righteous indignation; till the same that wounded, speak peace. For the same is to speak peace, and not another; "I the Lord wound, and I heal; I kill, and I make alive." Judgment is mine, and mercy is mine; and they both issue from my lips. (See Isa. xii. 1.) So every one, that would not be deceived about, nor misapply the promises, wait to feel that in you, which leads into the condition to which the promise belongs, and to be led into and kept in the condition by it. And then, the same that leads into the condition, will apply the promise to him who is in the condition, the ear being open to him, hearkening to the Lord, waiting what he will speak, who speaks peace to his people in his seasons; and having the ear shut against the voice of the unrighteous troubler of the souls of God's heritage. Yea, he that applieth the promises to the soul (having brought it into the state to which they belong), he also will lead and bring unto the fulfilling of the promises, even to the receiving of the good things promised and waited for; so that the soul shall witness the gospel to be a glorious state indeed; a state of life, a state of liberty, a state of power, a state of dominion, a state of holiness, a kingdom of righteousness and peace, wherein there are everlasting mansions and dwelling-places in Christ Jesus, for the seed of the righteous for evermore.

The Lord God of everlasting mercy, life, power, and rich goodness, cause the light of his own Holy Spirit to shine into your hearts, guide you thereby into and in the true way, even in the pure, living path (which was and is but one for ever) that ye may come into the true possession, and full enjoyment, and infallible witnessing of these things.

23d of the Second month, 1668.

There is another Query of great Concernment, which springeth up in my Heart towards you.

Query. Is not the Spirit, or anointing, the great gospel promise, and the great gospel ordinance? Is not he *truth, and no lie*, and the leader out of all lies and deceits into the truth, and the preserver of the mind and spirit therein? "Little children," said the same apostle, who had directed to the anointing, "keep yourselves from idols." Is there any possibility of being kept from images and idols but by him? Can any understand the things of the Spirit, or the words spoken by the Spirit concerning spiritual things, but by him? And then, is not every apprehension, that ye take up from the Scriptures concerning spiritual things, which ye have not from him, but comprehend and gather of yourselves, an image, or conceiving of your own, concerning that thing, and not that true knowledge and understanding of the thing which he alone can give? Oh that all the chambers of imagery were thrown down in you, and every idol of the heart and mind discovered to you, and broken down by the light and power of the Lord! that ye might come to that which is pure and living, and by its purifying know the pure heart, the pure mind, the pure conscience, and offer up the pure, perfect offering; not the lame, blind, imperfect, &c., which were not accepted, in the figure, under the law, nor acceptable under the gospel. Mal. i. 11. 13. and chap. iii. 3.

Friends, ye must know that which is pure from God, and ye must come into it (out of that which is impure, into that which is pure). Now that ye may do so, ye must know the purifying; for nothing that is impure can enter into that which is pure. Yea, ye must become priests to God, and wear the priest's garment, the pure garment, the living garment, the fine linen, without mixture of the woollen. Ye must be born of the innocency, be clothed with the innocency. The stony, hard, desperately wicked heart must be taken away, and the tender heart of flesh received, the

mind renewed to God, the fear put within (which cleanseth and keepeth clean), the law written within, the Spirit of the Lord put in the inward parts, and felt powerfully operating and changing there. Yea, and the inside must not only be clean, but the outside also; for ye must be clothed with the Spirit, clothed with the Lamb's righteousness and holiness; and thus ye must appear before the Lord in his temple, which is the beauty of holiness, whose house holiness becomes for ever; where ye are never to appear in your own filthy rags, but in the nature, Spirit, righteousness, and life of Christ. And thus ye are well pleasing to God, even in that which is of God; being born of that, formed of that, found in that, appearing in that. But in his own, no man can be accepted; for it is determined of God, and stands irreversible for ever, that in his own (in his own knowledge, in his own faith, in his own obedience, in his own righteousness, in his own willing and running, &c.) shall no flesh for ever be justified in his sight; but only and alone in the nature, Spirit, life, righteousness, faith, obedience, and holiness of his Son. Therefore wait for the seed, that ye may know the seed, feel the seed, the pure seed of life (the leaven of the heavenly kingdom), and may witness it arising and come in you to do the will, and you in it quickened and enabled to live to and serve the living God. And when ye know this seed, ye know Christ; and when ye receive this seed, ye receive Christ; and if it live in you, Christ lives in you; and in it (being in it, and abiding in it) are ye heirs of the life, kingdom, and power, which hath no end; and shall daily feel the promises and blessings belonging to the seed, flowing in upon your spirits. But if ye content yourselves with the knowledge of Christ which the erring and apostatized spirit of man from the life and power may gather out of the letter of the Scriptures, and feed thereon; that will not nourish you up to eternal life, but death and sin, and the gates of hell will have power over you notwithstanding that; but if ye, through the Spirit, receive power over that which is contrary to God, and through him mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Therefore wait

for the manifestation of the pure power of the endless life, which is now dispensed from on high (blessed be the name of the living one!), and wait to know and be joined to that seed of life, wherein and whereby it is dispensed, that ye may witness Christ's kingdom come to you, and the reign of your spirits with him therein, over all that captivateth from him, loadeth the soul, boweth down and oppresseth.

A POSTSCRIPT

Concerning Deceit and being Deceived.

THERE is that which deceives (where it is hearkened to), and there is that which is liable to be deceived by it. There is likewise that which deceiveth not; and there is also that which cannot be deceived. So likewise there is a pure fear and watching in the truth against the deceit, lest by any means it should enter and betray. As also there is a fear that is a snare (which the true faith preserves out of) whereby many are entangled in the very bowels of deceit, even concerning those very things about which they are afraid they should be deceived. This hath been experienced by those, who have been acquainted with the Lord's precious truth, and thereby are come to know and discern the wiles and devices of Satan; who often hath quenched what the Lord hath kindled, by his stirring up a fear, lest it should not be of the Lord, but from the spirit of deceit.

It is true, that in the apostasy from the life and Spirit of truth, deceit did generally prevail and overwhelm the minds of people. And so far as people are yet in the apostasy (not being gathered and redeemed out of it, by the Spirit and power of the Lord), they are yet under deceit; though perhaps they little think so. Little did we think formerly (and little do they think now, who are now in that state we were then in), that while we so much feared being deceived, we were already deceived, being short of the life and power of truth, which alone is able to make free and preserve from deceit. When the Lord cometh to bring to

the primitive light and principle, that he might perfectly deliver out of deceit; what can the enemy do more advantageously towards keeping his hold in the mind, and towards keeping the mind in the deceits wherein he hath already entangled it, than to stir up and heighten a fear in it, lest the precious truth, which God maketh manifest to deliver the soul by, should be deceit? And they that hearken to, and let in, the voice of the deceiver, must needs believe it to be so. And thus with them light cometh to be called darkness, and darkness light. Yea, who is it, at this day, who escapeth this snare, of calling evil good, and good evil? Surely none but he, whose soul is led into and lives in the light and power of truth.

For most men take up principles, according to their own or other men's understanding of the Scriptures, and judge according to those principles; and so the Spirit and light of the Lord judgeth not in them, but they themselves judge according to an assumed knowledge. So that flesh is not silent, the man is not dead in them and brought to nothing, but only lives in a higher region than he did before. Before, he lived in an apparent unrighteousness; now he lives in an imagined righteousness and faith; but not in the Son's righteousness, not in the Son's faith, not in the Son's power, not in the Son's dominion; but at best only in that which he apprehendeth and strongly imagineth to be so.

Oh! happy is he, who is come through all his own imaginings and conceivings about the things of God, and his own apprehensions about scriptures and promises, and is come into the thing itself, into the Spirit of life (into the truth and into the power), and who walks with God therein, daily witnessing the redemption which is of him, through his Son Jesus Christ, who is known and partook of in the pure, quickening Spirit, and not otherwise. And he that is truly begotten of God, and dwells with him in the light which is eternal, knows that he is of God; which others may strongly imagine they are, but none else can truly know it, but may easily err and be entangled in the deceits of the enemy about the new birth, and other weighty things, while they

are greatly afraid of being deceived by him, and so, through that fear, fly the pure truth, which frees from deceits, lest it should deceive them.

A Brief Account of my Soul's Travel towards the Holy Land, and how at length it pleased the Lord to join my Heart to his pure, holy, living Truth; wherein I have witnessed the New Covenant, and Peace with the Lord therein. With a few Words concerning the way of Knowing and Receiving the Truth: which is not done by Disputes and Reasonings of the Mind about it; but in waiting aright for the Demonstration and Power of God's Spirit to open the Heart and Understanding, and by submissive Obedience to it, even in its lowest Appearances in the inward Parts.

My heart from my childhood was pointed towards the Lord, whom I feared and longed after from my tender years; wherein I felt, that I could not be satisfied with (nor indeed seek after) the things of this perishing world, which naturally pass away; but I desired true sense of, and unity with, that which abideth for ever. There was somewhat indeed then still within me (even the seed of eternity) which leavened and balanced my spirit almost continually; but I knew it not distinctly, so as to turn to it, and to give up to it, entirely and understandingly. In this temper of mind I earnestly sought after the Lord, applying myself to hear sermons, and read the best books I could meet with, but especially the Scriptures, which were very sweet and savory to me; yea, I very earnestly desired and pressed after the knowledge of the Scriptures, but was much afraid of receiving men's interpretations of them, or of fastening any interpretation upon them myself; but waited much, and prayed much, that from the Spirit of the Lord I might receive the true understanding of them, and that he would chiefly endue me with that knowledge, which I might feel sanctifying

and saving. And indeed I did sensibly receive of his love, of his mercy, and of his grace, which I felt still freely to move towards me, and at seasons when I was most filled with the sense of my own unworthiness, and had least expectations of the manifestation of them. But I was exceedingly entangled about election and reprobation (having drunk in that doctrine, according as it was then held forth by the strictest of those that were termed Puritans, and as then seemed to be very manifest and positive from Rom. ix. &c.), fearing lest, notwithstanding all my desires and seekings after the Lord, he might in his decree have passed me by; and I felt it would be bitter to me to bear his wrath, and be separated from his love for evermore; yet, if he had so decreed, it would be, and I should (notwithstanding these fair beginnings and hopes) fall away and perish at the last. In this great trouble and grief (which was much added to by not finding the Spirit of God so in me and with me, as I had read and believed the former Christians had it), and in mourning over and grappling with secret corruptions and temptations, I spent many years, and fell into great weakness of body; and often casting myself upon my bed, did wring my hands and weep bitterly, begging earnestly of the Lord, daily, that I might be pitied by him, and helped against my enemies, and be made comformable to the image of his Son, by his own renewing power. And indeed at last (when my nature was almost spent, and the pit of despair was even closing its mouth upon me) mercy sprang, and deliverance came, and the Lord my God owned me, and sealed his love unto me, and light sprang within me, which made not only the Scriptures, but the very outward creattures glorious in my eye, so that every thing was sweet and pleasant and lightsome round about me. But I soon felt, that this estate was too high and glorious for me, and I was not able to abide in it, it so overcame my natural spirits; wherefore, blessing the name of the Lord for his great goodness to me, I prayed unto him to take that from me which I was not able to bear, and to give me such a proportion of his light and presence, as was suitable to my present state,

and might fit me for his service. Whereupon this was presently removed from me; yet a savor remained with me, wherein I had sweetness, and comfort, and refreshment for a long season. But my mind did not then know how to turn to and dwell with that which gave me the savor, nor rightly to read what God did daily write in my heart, which sufficiently manifested itself to be of him, by its living virtue and pure operation upon me; but I looked upon the Scriptures to be my rule, and so would weigh the inward appearances of God to me by what was outwardly written, and durst not receive any thing from God immediately, as it sprang from the fountain, but only in that mediate way. Herein did I limit the Holy One of Israel, and exceedingly hurt my own soul, as I afterwards felt and came to understand. Yet the Lord was tender to me, and condescended exceedingly, opening scriptures to me, freshly every day, teaching and instructing, warming and comforting my heart thereby; and truly he did help me to pray, and to believe, and to love him and his appearances in any; yea, to love all the sons of men, and all his creatures, with a true love. But that in me which knew not the appearances of the Lord in my spirit, but would limit him to words of scriptures formerly written, that proceeded yet further, and would be raising a fabric of knowledge out of the scriptures, and gathering a perfect rule (as I thought) concerning my heart, my words, my ways, my worship; and according to what I thus drank in (after this manner, from the Scriptures) I practised, and with much seriousness of spirit and prayer to God fell a helping to build up an Independent congregation, wherein the savor of life and the presence of God was fresh with me, as I believe there are yet some alive of that congregation can testify.

This was my state, when I was smitten, broken, and distressed by the Lord, confounded in my worship, confounded in my knowledge, stripped of all in one day (which it is hard to utter) and was matter of amazement to all that beheld me. I lay open and naked to all that would inquire of me, and strive to search out what might be the cause the Lord

should deal so with me. They would at first be jealous that I had sinned and provoked him so to do; but when they had scanned things thoroughly, and I had opened my heart nakedly to them, I do not remember any one that ever retained that sense concerning me. My soul remembereth the wormwood and gall, the exceeding bitterness of that state, and is still humbled in me in the remembrance of it before the Lord. Oh, how did I wish with Job, that I might come before him, and bowingly plead with him; for indeed I had no sense of any guilt upon me, but was sick of love towards him, and as one violently rent from the bosom of his beloved! Oh, how gladly would I have met with death! For I was weary all the day long, and afraid of the night, and weary also of the night-season, and afraid of the ensuing day. I remember my grievous and bitter mournings to the Lord; how often did I say, O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me? Why hast thou broken me to pieces? I had no delight but thee, no desire after any but thee. My heart was bent wholly to serve thee, and thou hast even fitted me (as appeared to my sense) by many deep exercises and experiences for thy service; why dost thou make me thus miserable? Sometimes I would cast mine eye upon a scripture, and my heart would even melt within me; at other times I would desire to pray to my God, as I had formerly done; but I found I knew him not, and I could not tell how to pray, or in any wise to come near him, as I had formerly done. In this condition I wandered up and down from mountain to hill, from one sort to another, with a cry in my spirit, Can ye tell news of my beloved? Where doth he dwell? Where doth he appear? But their voices were still strange to me, and I would retire sad and oppressed, and bowed down in spirit, from them.

Now surely, all serious, sober, sensible people, will be ready to inquire, how I came satisfyingly to know the Lord at length; or whether I do yet certainly know him, and am yet truly satisfied?

Yes indeed, I am satisfied at my very heart. Truly my

heart is united to him whom I longed after, in an everlasting covenant of pure life and peace.

Well then, how came this about? will some say.

Why thus. The Lord opened my spirit, the Lord gave me the certain and sensible feeling of the pure seed, which had been with me from the beginning; the Lord caused his holy power to fall upon me, and gave me such an inward demonstration and feeling of the seed of life, that I cried out in my spirit: *This is he, this is he; there is not another, there never was another. He was always near me, though I knew him not* (not so sensibly, not so distinctly, as now he was revealed in me and to me by the Father); *oh that I might now be joined to him, and he alone might live in me.* And so in the willingness which God had wrought in me (in this day of his power to my soul), I gave up to be instructed, exercised, and led by him, in the waiting for and feeling of his holy seed, that all might be wrought out of me which could not live with the seed, but would be hindering the dwelling and reigning of the seed in me, while it remained and had power. And so I have gone through a sore travail, and fight of afflictions and temptations, of many kinds; wherein the Lord hath been merciful to me in helping me, and preserving the spark of life in me, in the midst of many things which had befallen me, whose nature tended to quench and extinguish it.

Now thus having met with the true way, and walked with the Lord therein, wherein daily certainty, yea, and full assurance of faith and of understanding is at length obtained; I cannot be silent (true love and pure life stirring in me and moving me) but am necessitated to testify of it to others; and this is it, to retire inwardly, and wait to feel somewhat of the Lord, somewhat of his Holy Spirit and power, discovering and drawing from that which is contrary to him, and into his holy nature and heavenly image. And then, as the mind is joined to this, somewhat is received, some true life, some true light, some true discerning; which the creature not exceeding (but abiding in the measure of) is safe; but it is easy erring from this, but hard abiding

with it, and not going before its leadings. But he that feels life, and begins in life, doth he not begin safely? And he that waits, and fears, and goes on no further than his Captain goes before him, doth he not proceed safely? Yea, very safely, even till he cometh to be so settled and established in the virtue, demonstration, and power of truth, as nothing can prevail to shake him. Now, blessed be the Lord, there are many at this day, who can truly and faithfully witness, that they have been brought by the Lord to this state. And thus have we learned of the Lord; to wit, not by the high, striving, aspiring mind, but by lying low, and being contented with a little. If but a crumb of bread! (yet if bread), if but a drop of water (yet if water), we have been contented with it, and also thankful to the Lord for it; nor by thoughtfulness, and wise searching and deep considering with our own wisdom and reason have we obtained it; but in the still, meek, and humble waiting, have we found that brought into the death, which is not to know the mysteries of God's kingdom, and that which is to live, made alive and increase in life.

Therefore he that would truly know the Lord, let him take heed of his own reason and understanding. I tried this way very far; for I considered most seriously and uprightly; I prayed, I read the Scriptures, I earnestly desired to understand and find out whether that, which this people, called Quakers, testified of, was the only way and truth of God (as they seemed to me but to pretend); but for all this prejudices multiplied upon me, and strong reasonings against them, which appeared to me as unanswerable. But when the Lord revealed his seed in me, and touched my heart therewith, which administered true life and virtue to me, I presently felt them there the children of the Most High, and so grown up in his life, power, and holy dominion (as the inward eye, being opened by the Lord, sees) as drew forth from me great reverence of heart, and praises to the Lord, who had so appeared among men in these latter days. And as God draweth, in any respect, oh, give up in faithfulness to him! despise the shame, take up the cross; for indeed it is

a way which is very cross to man, and which his wisdom will exceedingly be ashamed of; but that must be denied and turned from, and the secret, sensible drawings of God's Spirit waited for and given up to. Mind, people: He that will come into the new covenant, must come into the obedience of it. The light of life, which God hath hid in the heart, is the covenant; and from this covenant God doth not give knowledge to satisfy the vast, aspiring, comprehending wisdom of man; but living knowledge, to feed that which is quickened by him; which knowledge is given in the obedience, and is very sweet and precious to the state of him that knows how to feed upon it. Yea truly, this is of a very excellent, pure, precious nature, and a little of it weighs down that great vast knowledge in the comprehending part, which the man's spirit and nature so much prizeth and presseth after. And truly, friends, I witness at this day a great difference between the sweetness of comprehending the knowledge of things, as expressed in the Scriptures (this I fed much on formerly), and tasting the hidden life, the hidden Manna in the heart (which is my food now, blessed for ever be the Lord my God and Saviour). Oh that others had a true, certain, and sensible taste of the life, virtue, and goodness of the Lord, as it is revealed there! Surely, it could not but kindle the true hunger, and inflame the true thirst; which can never be satisfied but by the true bread, and by water from the living fountain. This the Lord (in the tenderness of his love, and in the riches of his grace and mercy) hath brought us to; and this we earnestly and uprightly desire and endeavor, that others may be brought to also; that they may rightly (in the true silence of the flesh, and in the pure stillness of spirit) wait for, and in the Lord's due time receive, that which answers the desire of the awakened mind and soul, and satisfies it with the true precious substance for evermore, amen.

SOME THINGS

RELATING TO RELIGION,

PROPOSED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY, SO TERMED;

TO WIT,

CONCERNING THE RIGHT GROUND OF CERTAINTY THEREIN.

CONCERNING TENDERNESS OF SPIRIT, AND PERSECUTION.

A QUERY CONCERNING SEPARATION.

CONCERNING WASHING AWAY SIN FROM THE CONSCIENCE; AND THE GARMENT OF SALVATION, AND WHAT IT IS THAT IS COVERED THEREWITH.

Likewise, some Questions and Answers, concerning the Church of the New Covenant, the Rock or Foundation whereon it is built, and its preservation by and upon the Rock.

With some Queries concerning the scattered and hidden Estate of the Church; and concerning that Church which got up in the view of the World, instead thereof; and was acknowledged by the World as if she had been the true Church; though in Deed and Truth she was not so.

WHEREUNTO ARE ADDED SOME QUERIES TO PROFESSORS, WHO SPEAK OF HIGH ATTAINMENTS, &C.

Written by one, whom it hath pleased the Lord, of his great goodness, and tender mercy, to lead out of the darkness, into his marvellous light; known among men by the name of

ISAAC PENINGTON.

TO THE

ROYAL SOCIETY,

So Termed.

Friends,

I have heard that ye are seeking after the excellency of nature and learning. I am not for discouraging any man, in endeavoring after that which is good, useful, and excellent in its kind and place; but it is the advantage of every thing, to know and abide in its place; and to honor and serve Him, from whom all good gifts and endowments come. Man hath but a moment in this world, and he is here no more; and then the spirit returneth to God that gave it, to give an account of the talent which he gave it, and its improvement thereof, to the glory of him that gave it, and to the salvation of its own soul. Now, this talent is of an higher kind than nature, and will lead higher than nature; giving a man to partake of that wisdom from which nature came; and teaching him to order all that is natural to its right end. For God is not an enemy to nature, but to the corruption and disorder of nature. I desire ye might know and partake of the true wisdom, and feel union with God in the principle of his own life; and the incorruptible and heavenly seed of God receive dominion over the earthly and corruptible. For this end singly, in the love springing up in my heart towards you (as it often doth, both towards particular persons and societies; for I am a friend to all, and a lover of all; sincerely desiring the good of all, and the right guidance of their souls to happiness), have I proposed these things following more particularly to your view, though they concern others also, that ye thereby might be awakened to search after that which is most excellent in you, and be acquainted

with the virtue and precious effects thereof, to the full satisfaction and complete joy of your souls, in that which alone is able fully to satisfy, and give them ground of durable joy and rejoicing, in that which is not of a perishing nature; but which was, and is, and will be, the same for ever.

From a friend to the everlasting peace of your souls, and a desirer of your welfare and prosperity in this world,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME THINGS RELATING TO RELIGION, &C.

Of Certainty, and rightly-grounded Assurance, in Matters of RELIGION.

THERE is a witness of and from God in every conscience; which, in his light, power, and authority, witnesseth for him, and against that which is contrary to him, as he pleaseth to move upon it, visiting and drawing the hearts of the sons of men by it.

From this witness proceeds the true and well-grounded religion in the mind towards God: for this witness both testifieth and demonstrateth that there is a God, and also inclineth the mind to desire and seek after the right knowledge and true worship of him.

And such who keep to this witness, and wait upon God therein, are taught by it the true spiritual worship; the true and pure fear of the Most High; the faith which he giveth to his saints; the love which is chaste and unfeigned; the hope which purifieth the mind, and anchors it on the eternal rock; the meekness, patience, gentleness, humility, &c., which is not of man's nature, but the gift of God, and the nature of the heavenly Giver.

And then for exercises of religion, as praying to the Father of spirits, hearing the heavenly voice, reading in the Spirit, and with the renewed understanding, singing and making melody in the heart (and also with the voice) to the Lord, as his life is felt, and the spiritual blessings and

treasure received; all these, and whatever else is judged necessary for the soul, are taught by this witness of God in the conscience, as the soul groweth up in the light, Spirit, nature, and holy power thereof.

But now, when the Lord reacheth to his witness in men, and is teaching their hearts by it, then the enemy, the other spirit, whose seat is in the other part, keepeth a noise there, to overbear the voice of the witness, and to make men take up religion in another part, which is shallow, and reacheth not to the depth and weight of truth, which is in the witness of God, and which the witness of God gives to them that come thither.

Thus the enemy stirreth up reasonings, imaginations, and consultations about God, and his worship; wherein he raiseth up the vain, shallow mind, forging and bringing forth somewhat pleasing and suitable to the earthly understanding; taking up the mind therewith, and engaging the heart in some such practices therefrom as may quiet and satisfy that part in men. For the ways that men take up in their reasonings and understandings, satisfy their reasonings and understandings; and so they walk in the light of the sparks, and warm themselves by the fire of their own kindling; but all this answers not the witness of God in them, nor will be approved by his light in their own consciences, when it comes again to be revealed and made manifest in them.

This was the ground of the error both of the Jews and Gentiles.

The Gentiles were enlightened by God with his true light; what might be known of God (suitable to their state and capacity) being manifested in them; insomuch as it is witnessed concerning them in the Scriptures (which are a true record and testimony), that they knew God. But when they knew him, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and so their foolish heart was darkened concerning him: and they worshipped him not as the witness taught them he was to be worshipped, not according to the manifestation of his light in them; but according to their

own foolish imaginations and reasonings, which taught them to make images of him, and so to worship him in and through creatures, according to their own inventions; which is not the true worship. Rom. i. 21, 22, 23.

So likewise the Jews, not keeping to the manifestation of his light within them (to the word or commandment nigh in the mouth and heart, to which Moses directed them), which would have taught and enabled them to have kept to the law of the letter without them,—they also ran into the nature and spirit of the heathen, and fell into imaginings and reasonings, which led them to worship like them; insomuch that they also changed their glory into the image of an ox, that eateth grass. Ps. cvi. 20.

Now from this part in man ariseth all the uncertainty, and doubts, and dissatisfaction about religion. And hence arise the opinions, and judgments, and reasonings, in the minds of men: yea, indeed, the best of men's religion here is but an opinion or judgment, which the breath of God's Spirit will shake and dissolve everywhere, sooner or later. All flesh is grass; and all the beauty of men's knowledge, religion, and worship here, will wither like grass. All the buildings and churches that are raised here (how beautiful soever) are but Babylon, built by man's understanding, by man's knowledge, by man's comprehension, by man's wisdom, by man's skill, and indeed in man's will and time, and their standing, beauty, strength, and glory, is but from man, and in man's day, and will fade away like a flower.

But the true certainty is in the day of God, from the light of his Spirit shining into man's spirit, from God's inward reaching to his heart by his power, and testifying his truth there. And this all the powers of darkness cannot prevail against in itself; no, nor against that man that is kept to it. For it is the rock (the only rock) upon which the whole church is built, and which cannot fail to preserve every member of the church which is built upon it.

Ye then which would come to certainty in religion, observe the way which is made manifest from God in this our day, blessed be his name, which is this: mind the wit-

ness of God in thy heart, and come to, and build upon, the light thereof. Dwell not in reasonings; take not up thy religion in reasonings of the mind; but pass through them, pass beyond them, into a light of an higher nature. Wait to know the birth which is from God, and the light which he gives to that birth. What is the birth? Is not the birth of and from the second Adam? And what is the heavenly birth's light? Is it not the light of the second Adam? Is it not in nature and kind above the light of the first Adam? Where is the seat of reasonings? Is it not the earthly mind, the fallen mind? Here lies man's strength; here is man's wisdom; here is man's life. It is so indeed; but the wisdom of Christ, the light of Christ, the life of Christ, the power of Christ, is a cross to this; finds it in the enmity against God, crucifies it, slays it, brings it to nothing; and he that will become wise as to God, must become a fool unto all this, a child, a babe, entering the kingdom without this, and must there remain naked as to this, and never put it on more.

Now observe (ye that have understanding and true sense) the difference between the religion which God hath taught us, and led us into, and the religions of all men upon the earth besides.

Our religion stands wholly out of that which all their religion stands in. Their religion stands in the comprehension, in a belief of a literal relation or description. Our religion stands in a principle which changeth the mind, wherein the Spirit of life appeareth to, and witnesseth in the conscience to and concerning the things of the kingdom; where we hear the voice, and see the express image of the Invisible One, and know things, not from an outward relation, but from their inward nature, virtue, and power. Yea, here (we must profess) we so know things, that we are fully satisfied about them, and could not doubt concerning them, though there never had been word or letter written of them; though indeed it is also a great comfort, and sweet refreshment to us, to read that testified of outwardly, which (through the tender mercy of our God) we feel and

enjoy inwardly. And in this our whole religion consists; to wit, in the silence and death of the flesh, and in the quickening and flowing life of the Spirit. For he who is of the new birth, of the new creation, of the second Adam (the Lord from heaven), is as really alive to God, and as really lives to him in his Spirit, as ever he was really dead in trespasses and sins in the time of his alienation and estrangement from God.

Of Tenderness of Spirit, and Persecution.

He which is born of God, he who is of the love, and in the love, cannot but be tender. He who is born of the earthly wisdom, who taketh up and holdeth forth a religion there, cannot but persecute. Why so? Because he cannot but judge that any man may take up religion as he hath done, and so, by reasonings, may come to acknowledge and take up what he hath taken up, and holdeth forth, or else he is wilful and stubborn, as he judgeth. But now he that is born of God, and hath received his light, knowledge, religion, and way of worship from him, he knoweth that no man can rightly receive them but the same way; to wit, from God, by the light which he causeth to shine into the heart at its pleasure, and in the faith which he gives. So that God's free and powerful Spirit is to be waited upon, for the working of all in his people, and not any forced to act beyond, or contrary to, the principle of his life and light in them.

A Query concerning Separation.

Query. Whether, after the apostasy from the Spirit, life, and power of the apostles, and the getting up of the antichristian state, church, and worship, there must not of necessity be a separation from all these, before there can be a recovery of the life and power again, and of the true church-state, which was brought forth in the days of the apostles?

Must there not be a perfect coming out of the corrupt state (in the whole nature, several parts and degrees of it) before there can be a restoration to and witnessing of the true and pure state? Must not the Christians now come out of all the antichristian inventions and churches, as well as the Christians of old came out of all the heathenish worship, yea, out of the Jewish worship and church (which once was of God) before they can become an holy building, an habitation to God in the Spirit? Yea, doth not the same Spirit which cried to the people of God then: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," &c., call and cry now: *Come out of her, my people*, out of Babylon, out of the false church, out of all the antichristian buildings, which are reared up after the several forms and ways of men's inventing, being out of the Spirit, life, and power, which alone is able to build up in and unto the Lord? And what is that which cries out against separation, in the day of the Lord's dividing and separating, but that spirit which would hold back the soul from being gathered to the Lord, in the chains of darkness, and in the land of death and confusion?

Oh that men knew that which divides and separates, and which is appointed by God to divide and separate both inwardly and outwardly, and might feel the full work and effect of it, even perfect separation from all that is not of God, that so they might be joined to him, and built up in him, who is the life, rest, peace, joy, and pure breath of the soul for ever! The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; and what doth it do? Why it separates between nation and nation, between church and church, between people and people, between cattle and cattle, between soul and soul, yea, between the thoughts and intents of the same heart; owning and cherishing all that is of the pure, and condemning and destroying all that is of the impure. And happy, oh! for ever happy is he, who can witness the work of this Word perfected in his soul, even the axe of the Lord powerfully laid to, and having cut down, all that is corrupt in him, that the pure plant of God may flourish, and bring forth fruit in him in peace, without an-

noyance or interruption of the impure. Then the river of life, as the streams of everlasting righteousness, shall flow into the vessel, and Jerusalem become in and to him a quiet habitation, and nothing be able to hurt or destroy any thing of life in him, who dwells in and abides on the mountain of God's holiness. Oh, blessed is the race of travellers, which in the pure light of the everlasting day are travelling thitherwards, even with their hearts and faces faithfully bent towards Zion, which is the holy, spiritual, heavenly hill of God! And blessed, oh blessed for ever is the Lord God of life and power, who is the faithful guider, leader, and conductor of all that follow the footsteps of the flock, in the way which is pure, true, living, and everlasting!

Concerning the washing away of Sin from the Conscience, and the Garment of Salvation, and what it is that is covered therewith.

THERE is somewhat appointed by God to wash away sin, which is the water of regeneration, the water of life, the Spirit's water, and the blood of the Lamb, which are known, received, and felt by faith in the light of the Spirit, wherein alone his work is wrought.

Thus now, upon believing, the soul is washed; the faith brings in, or lets in, the water and blood, which cleanse and purge the conscience from the sin, which before stained and defiled it: and according to the faith, so is the water and blood let in, and accordingly is the washing. And he that is baptized, he that is washed by the Spirit, comes out of the water clean; and watching to the light wherein he was purified, witnesseth the powerful word of life as able to preserve in cleanness, as it was to cleanse.

But if there be not a watch to, and faith in, and single-hearted obedience to, that which purified, and keepeth pure, there is that near which will defile, where it is hearkened to and let in; there is that which will tempt to lust and sin, and so draw into darkness and death again. And if any

man sin afterwards, sin defiles again, and the stain thereof will lie upon the conscience, till, by repentance and faith, the water and blood be let in again, and the cleansing virtue from it received and restored again. So that if any man sin, there is an advocate,* an intercessor, a divine helper, one who hath the water of life, and the blood of life to wash with. There is a fountain set open for sin, and for uncleanness, for Judah and Jerusalem to wash therefrom; but every defilement and pollution sticks until it be washed off.

Now, there are sins of several kinds. Some are easily remitted and washed off, insomuch as the stain is hardly felt by the soul, the tender mercy and pure life doth so readily and naturally flow over them. Some, again, are long held and bound by the Spirit upon the conscience, and often remembered to the heart, which is apt to backslide: yea, there is, in some cases, a severe judgment, and a long waiting on the Lord for his mercy, and for his renewing and enlivening of faith, before the water and blood which washeth can be again felt. For faith is not in a man's power, nor repentance neither; but they are given of God, to whom and when he pleaseth. And a man that is in part converted may give ear to the enemy, and let in sin and death upon the soul; but he cannot repent again presently, nor believe again presently; but as God breathes upon him, and revives the work of faith and repentance in him.

There were sins under the old covenant, and there are sins under the new. The sins of the old covenant did lie upon him that committed them, until they were expiated according to the law of the old covenant; and sins under the new covenant lie also upon the soul and conscience, until they be expiated according to the law of the new covenant; which is until the Advocate interpose and plead with the Father, and give faith and repentance to the soul, and sprinkle upon the heart and conscience that water and blood which hath virtue in it to wash. And if it were not for this

* But this is not the state of them that sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of truth.

after-washing (as I may so say) no man could be saved: but though he were once washed, yet sinning again afterwards, he would die in his sins (and so fall under condemnation), unless he were again washed. Oh! blessed be the name of the Lord, for the water and blood of the covenant, and for his continual pouring them out upon the souls of his, in the light that is eternal!

Now, as men come to the truth as it is in Jesus, they will find their own apprehensions about these things to have been but dreams, wherewith the enemy hath fed and pleased them, while he hath lulled them asleep in the night of darkness, that he might the better steal away the true, weighty knowledge of the things of the kingdom from them. Thus men have dreamed about justification, about sanctification, about regeneration, about redemption, about faith, hope, love, righteousness, peace, joy, &c.: and have been mistaken about them, missing of that power and light whereby and wherein they are revealed and made manifest. Now, he that will rightly know these things must know them in the feeling and true experience; and therein he shall find all these are wrought in a mysterious way of pure life's operation, out of the reach of man's comprehension; and no man can understand them, but as the new and holy understanding is given him; nor retain the sense and knowledge of them, but as he abides in the new nature, and retains the new understanding.

So for the garment of salvation; that is Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the nature of Christ, the Spirit of Christ. This is the holy covering. He that puts on Christ, puts on this: he that wears Christ, wears this: he that appears before God in Christ, appears in this; and the soul puts on this, as it puts off the other. It is the purified soul that only puts on him that is pure: and as a man is cleansed from the impure, so only hath he in him a capacity of receiving and being clothed with Christ. And this now is the work of the true ministry; to wit, to preach the Word, to reveal the Word, and bring the mind to the Word (which changeth it, and begets the new capacity), and so to begin

the work of life and reconciliation, wherein and whereby there is some unclothing of the old, and some clothing with the new; and so to carry on this work in the Spirit and power of the Father until it be perfected. And is this a blessed work, and blessed is the ministry which is called to, and entrusted with, this work, being faithful in it: and blessed are they that witness the truth of, and receive the effect of, this ministry, and are subject to it in the Lord. For through and under this ministry there is a receiving of a perfect gift in some measure at first (wherein some true union and little acquaintance with the Lord of life is at first witnessed, and some operation of the light and power of his Holy Spirit): and a growing up in it unto perfection, as the soul is exercised by it, and faithful to the Lord in the exercise, under the daily cross, which daily worketh against and crucifieth in the heart, mind, life, and conversation whatever is contrary to God, as it is singly waited for, taken up, and subjected to.

Some Questions and Answers Concerning

The Church of the New Covenant, the Rock or Foundation whereon it is built, and its Preservation by and upon the Rock. With some Queries concerning the scattered Estate of the true Church, and concerning that Church which got up in its Stead, and made a great Show with her golden Cup, for the Time while the true Church was scattered.

Quest. 1. What is the church of God under the new agreement or covenant?

Ans. It is a company of living stones, quickened by God, [illegible] in the unity and fellowship of his Spirit, [illegible]her in his Spirit, and offer up unto [illegible]ceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

[illegible]e old covenant? Was it not the [illegible]rd Jews, the children of the old

covenant? And what is the church of the new covenant? Is it not the seed of God, the Jews inward, the children of the new covenant?

Quest. 2. How are these stones joined together?

Ans. By the Spirit of life, which begets them all in one nature, and knits them together in that nature. By the inward circumcision, cutting off that which causeth enmity and disunion, and so fitting them to be made one new lump in Christ. By Christ's baptism, which is the baptism of fire and of his Spirit, which burns up the old, earthly nature, and so baptizes them into one new, living body, suitable and fitting to their head, which is the fountain of life, and distributes life through all the body, according to its capacity, need, and service.

Quest. 3. Upon what is this church built?

Ans. Upon the rock or foundation of God, which God hath laid in his spiritual Zion; which rock is Christ. For "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" nor other rock did the Lord ever choose for his church to be built upon; nor hath any other rock sufficient strength to bear up the building against the storms and stress of the powers of darkness, which it often meeteth with, even every member, in its travels; after it is once built on the rock, the gates of hell press hard upon it; but abiding on the rock, it feels the strength and preservation of the rock. For as they cannot prevail against Christ, so neither can they prevail against that which is built upon him. But if there be a going forth from the strength and preservation, there is a liableness to be made a prey. And the promise is not absolutely and perpetually to that person or congregation which is received or let into the truth; but to that person or church which abideth and continueth in the truth unto the end. The Jews were safe in the faith and obedience of their covenant; and the Christians, or Christian churches, are not safe but in the faith and obedience of theirs. For if they walked not humbly with the Lord, and in his fear, which keeps the heart from departing *from him,* and in the faith whereby they stand, they were

to be cut off from their church-state, as well as the Jews were from theirs, as the apostle Paul expressly tells the church at Rome. Rom. xi. 21, 22.

Quest. 4. What was Paul?

Ans. The apostle of the Gentiles, who labored abundantly, even more abundantly than all the other apostles; and hath left more instructions relating to the Gentiles than all the apostles besides; and was tender of them, in standing for and defending their liberty in Christ, when Peter a little warped, and was to be blamed. Gal. ii. 11. For indeed man cannot be certain and infallible, further than he keepeth to, and is exercised by, the certain and infallible Spirit; which he is subject to be tempted to err from, further than he stands upon the watch, and cannot but err from, unless he feel a continual preservation in the fear, and by the power of the Lord. And the certainty of truth doth not depend so much upon the person from whom it is received, as upon the demonstration and evidence to the conscience wherein it is received. The apostles were not lords over the true Christians' faith; but helpers of their joy. And Christ did not require his disciples to believe whatever he knew to be true; but prepared their capacities, and dropped in according to their capacities. And this is the way of true ministers, to wait on God to beget, and on him again to water the begotten soul, and carry on his work in it; to make them know Christ their Master, from whom they are to receive light, life, instruction, and direction; and to feel the Head, and be joined to the Head, and receive from the Head their knowledge, as well the least as the greatest. Heb. viii. What is Paul? What is Apollos? What is Cephas? Were not they carnal that cried up these one above another? Yet the younger ought to be subject to the elder, and all to be subject one to another in the truth. 1 Pet. v. 5.

Quest. 5. What was Peter?

Ans. One of the disciples of Christ, a precious stone in the building (John i. 43.), one of the most eminent apostles, even the chosen minister to them of the circumcision, as Paul was to the Gentiles. But he knew that Christ was

the only rock or foundation, as well as Paul, and that Christ alone was able to bear the weight of that building, and to defend it against the gates of hell; and he never had commission, nor can it be proved that he ever preached himself the rock, but he preached Christ the foundation-stone, the rock of offence, the rock of defence, &c. see 1 Pet. ii. 4. and ver. 6, 7, 8. And if an angel from heaven, or any man or church on earth, so interpret any scripture, as to hold forth any such thing, that any else besides Christ is the rock, they plainly show that they are erred from the truth, and that their interpretation is of their own private spirit, and not that public Spirit which all the prophets of God, and apostles, and truly holy men were guided by.

Quest. 6. Was the church always to be a gathered company? Or was there a possibility of their being scattered?

Ans. There was a possibility of their being scattered; yea, a certainty, if they grew corrupt in doctrine and practice, and kept not the faith. Rom. xi. For the Lord God intended a pure building, a spiritual building, fit to offer the spiritual sacrifices. 1 Pet. ii. 5. A holy people, separated from the world, 2 Cor. vi. 17. in which he might dwell and walk. ver. 16. If therefore any church depart from the Spirit and life and power of the apostles, and mix again with the world, losing their own proper pale which fenced from the world, they soon lose that which maketh them a church of God, and so become a synagogue of Satan.

Now, it is in my heart also to propound a few queries concerning the scattered and hidden estate and condition of the church, and concerning that church which got up in the view of the world, and was acknowledged by the world instead thereof afterwards.

Quest. 1. Whether the true church did retain her ministry outwardly, and her outward ordinances, and way of worship of the outward court, after her scattering? Or whether the false church, which appeared in her room as if she had been the true, caught up and appeared in the outwardness of these? The grounds of this query are these following:

1. Because, upon God's measuring of his temple and

worshippers, the outward court (consider well what that is, and how far it extends) was left out of God's measure; so that he intended to reckon it no longer as his, but given by him to the Gentile Christians; such as were Christians or Jews in name, but Gentiles in spirit and nature. Rev. xi.

2. Because in the last days, when that strange generation of Christians was to spring up, who should be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; yet these should have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. 2 Tim. iii. 1 to 6. Now mind: the temple wherein was the power, God had removed with the true worshippers; but the outward court (wherein was the appearance of some kind of a form of a church, ministry, and ordinances) those had got, and were found worshipping in it, in the midst of all this great wickedness and abomination of spirit.

3. Because the Jews (who were the type), while they were in captivity in Babylon, could not sing the songs of Zion, nor had the worship of the outward Jerusalem there.

And can the spiritual Jews sing the spiritual songs of spiritual Zion, in Mystery-Babylon? No; there they are but witnesses to that life and power which the true church enjoyed and flourished with, in her built estate.

Quest. 2. Whether this is not an infallible mark, and most certain demonstration of the false church,—her sitting upon many waters; which waters are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues? Did not the Spirit of the Lord thus mark her out to John? Rev. xvii. 15. Did the true church ever sit upon many waters? Was not the church a gathering out of the nations, into the power and life which the nations persecuted? But the false church sits over the nations with a form of godliness, but without the true power thereof. Then if this be a mark that God hath set upon her, let every one wait to read it aright, that he may know

[illegible]

Quest. 4. [illegible]

Ans. [illegible]

[illegible] 1 Pet. ii. 5. [illegible] 2 Cor. vi. 17. [illegible] and walk. ver. 16. If therefore any [illegible] Spirit and life and power of the [illegible] with the world, losing their own [illegible] from the world, they soon lose t[illegible] church of God, and so become a [illegible]

[illegible] ist [illegible] seat [illegible] time he [illegible] ning of [illegible] e thun- [illegible] n the book [illegible] their several [illegible] upon anti- [illegible] be stripped [illegible] fire, and her [illegible] true Head and

Now, it is in my heart also [illegible] concerning the scattered and [illegible] of the church, and concerning [illegible] the view of the world, and was [illegible] instead thereof afterwards. [illegible] as feel some- [illegible] Spirit and truth

Quest. 1. Whether the true [illegible] outwardly, and her outward [illegible] of the outward court after [illegible] false churc[illegible] not his call out [illegible] her, but abide [illegible] ways or worships, [illegible] and judging of [illegible] of her plagues?

[illegible] great reason to

fear before the Lord, and to look to their ways and worships, lest they be found in any thing therein which is not of him, but contrary to him, and so bring upon their souls and bodies that wrath and sore judgment from God which they are not able to bear? Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.

Quest. 8. Whether it was not the great love and mercy of God to warn the churches of these things in the book of the Revelations? And whether he can be safe in these respects, who either doth not understand, or not observe, the warnings given by the Spirit of the Lord therein? How often is it therein said: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit of God saith to the churches." It is also said: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." He, then, that readeth not, that hath not an ear to hear the words of this prophecy, how can he keep what is written therein? How can he beware and avoid the seeming beauty and glory of the false church, or suffer with the faithful witnesses of God in their testimony against her? And if he do not thus, but is entangled by the false church with her golden cup of fornications, (Rev. xvii. 4.) he misseth of the blessing; and ah! what is he to meet with instead thereof! My heart hath often melted within me, and my bowels rolled at the consideration and deep sense which the Lord hath given me of these things; and this I say therein, to those that desire life and peace from God, Oh! wait on him for the eye which sees in his light, for the ear which hears his voice, and for the heart which understands the words and messages of his Spirit, that ye may feel his gathering, guidance, and preservation out of that, to which his wrath is for ever, and against which his wrath is to be made more manifest, and poured out more fully and abundantly than ever it yet was. For the Lord will empty his love and his life into Zion, and empty the very dregs and thick mixtures of the cups of his indignation into the very heart and bowels of Babylon; and her sickness, misery, woe, death, and destruction will be exceeding dreadful and unutterable. Therefore wait on the

Lord in fear and singleness of spirit, crying and mourning unto him to discover to you the extent and limits of this false church, this false building, this building in a form and outward order, without the life and power of the Spirit; and then fly as fast out of her, and from her (and as far), as the Spirit of the Lord leads, even till ye come to the holy building, which is of him, and the heavenly places which are prepared there by him, for every one of his (according to their growth and stature in his Son), that ye may sit down in him.

Some QUERIES to PROFESSORS, who speak of high Attainments and Experiences in Religion, and yet do not witness, nor can acknowledge, the Truth, as the Lord hath now revealed it (and done great Things by it in the Spirits of his People), but look upon it as a poor, mean and low Thing.

Query 1. HAVE ye known the great and terrible day of the Lord, wherein he ariseth to shake terribly the earth? And have ye known that shaken down in you which must be shaken down and removed as a cottage, before the everlasting kingdom can be established in you?

Query 2. Do ye know the living, powerful, eternal word, which is quick and piercing, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing between thought and thought, grace and grace, (as I may so speak) light and light, life and life, spirit and spirit, power and power? &c. Have ye known it a hammer, a fire, an axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree? And do ye know the corrupt tree (root, branches, leaves, and fruit) so cut down by it as to cumber the ground no more?

Query 3. Do ye know the paradise of God, and the tree of life there? Do ye indeed feed thereon? Have ye passed through the flaming sword to the tree of life? And is the flaming sword (which once fenced from life, and the power thereof) set now to fence up the way to the tree of knowledge, that ye may feed no more thereon, and die, but feed

only on that which is life, and gives life, and so live for ever?

Query 4. Have ye witnessed the effects of the great and terrible day of the Lord in your spirits? Is antichrist destroyed, the whore burnt, flesh consumed, man ceased from, both within and without? Is the loftiness of man bowed down in you, the mighty removed out of his seat, and the meek, holy, humble seed raised up to rule in righteousness in your hearts? Is every high tower battered down, and every fenced wall laid flat? Are all your imaginations, and conceivings, and fleshy apprehendings upon scriptures, yea, every pleasant picture and image of the things in heaven (formed in your minds) brought to an end, and the pure living truth of the Father waited for, received from him, and lived in? Yea, is the Lord alone exalted in your spirits, and all other dominion, authority, rule, and lordship put under?

Query 5. Do ye know the mountain of the Lord's house, and the Lord's house built and established by his own Holy Spirit and power upon his own holy mountain? And do ye worship the Lord alone therein? Do ye come up to the New Jerusalem, to offer your sacrifices there, according to the institution of the gospel? And do ye worship the Lord there, on his own day, which he hath spiritually made? And do ye bear no burden, kindle no fire, do no work on that his day? Do ye never warm yourselves at any fire, or by any sparks of your own kindling? Or are ye yet worshipping upon some of the many mountains and hills which the Lord hath not formed nor established; but have been formed and set up by man in the night of darkness, before the everlasting light of the day break forth?

Query 6. Do ye know the wilderness through which the passage is from Egypt to Canaan? And have ye faithfully travelled in the leadings of God's Spirit there through? And are ye entered into the pure rest thereof? Are ye not under the law, but under grace; not under the enemy's power, but under the Spirit's power, out of the other's reach, so that the wicked one cannot touch you? Have ye gone through the

exercises and trials of the wilderness? Have ye fed on the manna dropt down from heaven upon your spirits therein? Have ye drunk of the water of the rock? Have ye seen the serpent lifted up, and felt the healing thereby? Have ye witnessed the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, to be your defence and leader? And have ye now at length received the kingdom of life, and set under the shadow of it, drinking water out of your own cistern, and eating under your own vine and fig-tree the fruits of the good land, after the shaking of that which was to be shaken; now being come to, and enjoying the kingdom which cannot be shaken? Have ye really felt these things, or have ye been in the dreams and imaginings about them?

Query 7. Do ye walk in the light of the Lord, as the spiritual house of Jacob is to do? Have ye received the Spirit? Do ye live in the Spirit? Are ye truly united, so as to become one Spirit with the Lord? Are all the walls of partition broken down? And is there nothing now between you, but of two ye are made one in that which uniteth?

If it be thus with you, then hold forth the right hand of fellowship to those whom the Lord hath brought hither; and know and acknowledge that whereby the Lord hath wrought in them. But if ye be not really in the thing itself, but only in the apprehensions and conceivings about it, ye can never so be witnesses concerning these things, nor concerning the truth whereby God works these things: and ye will find there is a great gulf between you and us, which ye cannot possibly pass over, till ye meet with our principle and guide, and faithfully travel with him in the footsteps of the flock, that ye may come to the Shepherd's tents (even the tents which the Shepherd pitcheth, and which no man can pitch), and may know the true tabernacle, sanctuary, and temple, whereof he is the Minister.

OF

THE CHURCH,

IN

ITS FIRST AND PURE STATE,

IN

ITS DECLINING STATE, IN ITS DECLINED STATE, AND IN ITS RECOVERY.

WITH THE WAY OF SALVATION IN THE COVENANT OF LIFE OPENED, AND SOME STUMBLING-BLOCKS REMOVED OUT OF THE WAY OF THE SIMPLE-HEARTED.

LIKEWISE SOME QUERIES CONCERNING THE NEW COVENANT.

WITH AN EXHORTATION TO ALL PEOPLE; BUT MORE ESPECIALLY TO SUCH AS ARE DESOLATE AND DISTRESSED.

Whereunto is added
A Visit of tender and upright Love to such as retain any Sincerity towards the Lord.
Also a brief Account of the ground of Certainty and Satisfaction, which it hath pleased the Lord to establish in my heart, concerning Religion, and the things of his Kingdom.
And a Question answered about the way of knowing the Motions, Doctrines, and Teachings of Christ's Spirit.
With somewhat relating to the Gospel Rest, or Sabbath.
And some Queries to such as complain of want of Power to become the Lord's, and serve Him.

By one who testifieth what he hath seen and heard and tasted and handled of the Word, and Life eternal,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

THE PREFACE.

THE true church is a mystery, and so is the false also; neither of which the outward eye of man's understanding is able to discern; but he alone who is enlightened and taught of God. Who can see how the Spirit of God works, changing men's hearts, gathering them into his truth, and building them up into an holy temple in his Son? And who can discern how the spirit of deceit works with an outward knowledge, doctrine, and form of religion, persuading or compelling men thereunto, and so builds up a false church? Yea, who can tell when the Spirit of the Lord withdraweth from the church, which was once his, leaving it to the other spirit to re-enter and possess; from which time it becometh a synagogue of Satan? There was need of the anointing of God's wisdom and Spirit to try Jews and apostles (for there were such, even in the apostles' days, as said they were so, but were not); and there is also need of the same wisdom and spirit to try churches, whether they be indeed the churches of Christ (in and of his Spirit and power) or only in the name and outward profession of the thing, without the nature, Spirit, life, and power thereof.

The apostle Paul (who was the apostle of the Gentiles, and knew what was likely to be their future state), writing to the Romans, tells them, that the Gentiles were cut out of the olive-tree, which was wild by nature; and were, contrary to nature, ingrafted into the true Olive-tree, and so came to partake of the root and fatness thereof. But withal he tells them, that unless they did continue in the faith, and in the goodness of God, keeping out of the highmindedness and conceitedness of their own estate and condition, in the fear (which makes the heart clean, and preserves it in the cleanness from that which would defile, and cause it to de-

part from the Lord) they likewise should be cut off. Rom. xi. 17, and 20, &c.

Now it would be seriously considered, whether the Gentile churches did abide in the faith, and in the goodness and power of the Lord, which gathered them? Or whether they grew high-minded, holding their estate in a presumption (as if the promise was so to them, that they must needs be the church for ever) out of the fear, and so were cast off by God, and cut off (according to the apostle's words) from God's Spirit, and so have not partook of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree, for many generations? It would also further be inquired (if it prove thus upon true search and examination, that they have been cut off), whether they can partake of the root and fatness of the true Olive-tree any more, till he that cast them off, gather and build them up again?

It is true, there have been witnesses against the corrupt state, even a seed who have been persecuted by it; and these have, in some measure, partook of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree, all this time of the degeneration. But hath the church-state of the Gentiles, which provoked God, and was cast off, and persecuted the witness of the Lamb, his holy seed, who could not but, in his nature and Spirit, testify against their corruption,—have they partook of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree, or have they not rather grown up from, and drunk in of, the sap and juice of another stock?

The same apostle speaks of the man of sin, that wicked one, the son of perdition; who should get into the temple of God, sit there, and show himself as God; and yet oppose and exalt himself above all that is truly called God, and that of right ought to be worshipped. 2 Thes. ii. 4. Now when he gets into the temple, doth not he leaven it with his wicked spirit, making it become wicked, like him that sits and reigns in it, and is the head of it? And doth the church or temple, all the while he sits in it, partake of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree? (Of Christ its former Vine, of Christ its former Head?) Or doth it not rather suck in, and partake of, the venom and poison of this new head?

And how long is this new head, this false head of the church, to sit in the temple? Is it not from the very time of his getting in, till Christ, by the Spirit of his mouth, consume and scatter him; and by the brightness of his appearance and coming, utterly destroy him? ver. 8.

This is certain (as certain as ever there was a true church in the days of the apostles), that after the apostles' days there got up a false church, which the Spirit of the Lord calls the great whore (indeed she was far bigger, by multitudes of degrees, than ever the true church was). This great whore had a golden cup in her hand, wherewith she made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drunk. And she sat upon many waters; which waters are peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues. Did ever the true church do thus? That was a little flock, gathered out of peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues, reigning in the Spirit and power of the Lord, over them only who were thus gathered; but never sat upon whole peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues, as this great whore hath done. Rev. xvii. 1—15.

Now it would be worth the inquiry what this cup is (this golden cup, which appears like gold). And what this wine is, wherewith she made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drunk. Ask her, and she will tell you: It is the cup of salvation, and her wine the wine of the kingdom, even the doctrine and discipline of holy mother-church; out of which, and without which, no man can be saved. But ask the Spirit of the Lord (or hear what the Spirit of the Lord said to the churches concerning it), and he will tell you, it is the wine of fornication, the cup of destruction, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication; and that she shall be so far from saving others, that she shall be destroyed and perish herself; and whoever drinks of her wine shall perish, unless he vomit it up again, and drink of the pure blood of the Lamb after it. See Rev. xvii. and also chap. xviii. and chap. xiv. 9, 10, 11.

Now one word, in the love and truth of God, to all that have separated from this church. Have ye separated fully? Have ye separated wholly? Have ye separated

from her in nature and spirit? Have ye waited for the building which God alone can rear; for the church which he alone can frame? Or have ye built up another church, in the resemblance and likeness of that ye separated from? This is a weighty thing: ye must answer it to God, and stand by his judgment therein. I beseech you consider it. "What will it profit a man," saith Christ, "if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" So say I in this case: What would it profit you, if ye could make your church stand, and be approved in the sight of the whole world, if the Lord disown and disallow it, and they that are gathered into it perish by it? If it be not of God's building, if it have not his presence, virtue, Spirit, and power in it, it cannot save. Oh, hear, hear! for the Lord will strip Babylon, and fill her with dreadful plagues and judgments; and she shall appear naked as she is, and become the scorn of every eye, and the reproach of every beholder: and that which hath been reproached, scorned, hated, and persecuted by her, the Lord will honor.

Now consider, and wait on the Lord, to know the extent of Babylon; that ye may not be found by the Spirit of the Lord (nor by his angels, which pour out his plagues upon her) within her limits. For the great whore is not Babylon only, or alone; but she is the Mother of harlots, and all her daughters are harlots also; even all that have built up churches, like her (in her spirit, with her materials) out of the leading, guidance, and power of the Spirit of truth.

OF THE CHURCH.

I. Of the CHURCH in its First and Pure State, when it was clothed with the Sun, had the Moon under its Feet, and was crowned with a Crown of Twelve Stars, travailing to bring forth, and brought forth the Man Child, which was to Rule all Nations with the Rod of Iron.

IT pleased the Father to send his Son into the world (in his name, power, and authority), to gather out of the world; and to manifest his name to the men whom he should gather out of the world. The Jews, for all their great profession, and high esteem of themselves, were but a worldly polity, having but worldly, elementary shadows of the good things to come, and to be set up in the kingdom of the Messiah. John preached that, *the kingdom was at hand;* Christ said, *it was come:* John prepared for it; Christ brought it. He came in the Spirit, in the life, in the virtue, in the dominion of the Most High; and he gathered disciples unto him, by the word and power of the Father. And those that continued in his word, were his disciples indeed; of his gathering; such as the Father had sent the Son out to seek; even the new sort of worshippers, who should worship neither at Samaria, nor Jerusalem; nor with reference to any other outward place; but in Spirit and in truth. They should meet together in that name, wherein Christ had gathered them; and meeting so, he would be in the midst of them, and they should feel the presence, power, and authority, which belonged to his church.

Now, if any would know what kind of persons these disciples are, Christ giveth many descriptions of them.

They are such as are born from above, such as are changed by the name and power which gathers them. They are Jews inward, circumcised inwardly; such as are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; squared stones, hewn by the Spirit, for the spiritual building; not old, rough, fierce, cruel, implacable, unregenerate, unholy spirits; but meek, gentle, lowly, tender, poor in spirit, merciful, peaceable in themselves, and making peace among men, renewed, and sanctified in spirit; holy in conversation, suffering (both from the heathenish, and from the worldly-professing spirit) for that power of truth and righteousness, which they profess and bear witness to. They are the salt of the earth, having that in them which seasoneth their own hearts, and which hath virtue in it to season others. They are the light of the world, having that in them which casts rays of light, conviction, and demonstration, wherever they go. They being changed into the leaven of the kingdom, become a leaven, and so a weight upon iniquity; testifying against, yea, bowing down and afflicting, that spirit, as the power of life springs in them and breaks forth through them.

Now, if the church be thus; if it be a gathering by the power into the power; by Christ, who came in the name, into the name in which he came; must not the ministry needs be much more thus? Must not they be grown in the name, be grown in the power, who are to minister to those who are gathered into the name, who are gathered into the power? Must not they be well grown in the Spirit, if they be able ministers of the Spirit? Did not Christ, when he sent out his disciples to preach in his name, give them of his Spirit and power? And afterwards, when he was to go away, and they to succeed him, what were they to succeed him in? Were they not to succeed him in his Spirit and power? And did not he bid them wait for it, and receive it, before they went forth to preach and set up his kingdom? And was it not by this the church was gathered? And can the church be preserved by any thing beneath this? Yea, falling short of this, is it not in a degenerated and fallen estate?

After that those who had been gathered in the name, had waited as Christ directed them, for the holy Spirit and power, and after it had fallen upon them, then the glory began, then the ministry shined, then the church (or people gathered in the Spirit and power) shined; then great life was in them all, then great grace and holiness was upon them all; then faith (which springs from the Spirit and power) was fresh, then love abounded; then they minded not earthly things, but the kingdom, the life, the glory, which was come upon them in power; then Satan's kingdom fell down like lightning, and they went on (in and with the Spirit which led them) conquering the Jewish professors, and the heathenish worshippers also; none being able to resist the power and Spirit wherein they spake and ministered. Read the scriptures of the New Testament, and wait on God for the opening of the true eye in you, and these things will be manifest and plain to you therein; for the sweetness, freshness, preciousness, and beauty of that state, may abundantly be read there, by those whose eyes the Lord opens. To instance in some places.

Peter writes two general epistles, in one whereof he speaks of their having received like precious faith with them, 2 Pet. i. 1. and in the other, that they did rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. 1 Pet. i. 8. Yea, he speaks also of their being as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood (mark; all God's people who are gathered into the name, who are of the faith, who are in the life and power, are priests unto him), to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Now, was it a small thing to be a priest under the law, to offer up the outward sacrifices thereof? What is it then to be a priest in the Holy Spirit and power of life?

John also writes a general epistle, wherein he divides Christians into three estates,—children, young men, fathers,—speaking great things and glorious of them all. He said, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." Paul had said, The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; but he said, the night is past, and the day is come.

1 John ii. 8. And he writes to all,—children, young men, fathers,—as being passed from the darkness, and in the light of the day. The little children had had their sins forgiven them for his name's sake, and had known the Father. ver. 12, 13. The young men were strong, and the word of God did abide in them, and they had overcome the wicked one. ver. 14. The fathers knew him that was from the beginning, ver. 13, 14. and knowing that, they knew enough; for that was it which appeared to save, and that was it which was to be preached, even that which was from the beginning, the light which was with God, the light which was in God, the light which was God, in which is no darkness at all. chap. i. 1. 5. Yea, the little children had an unction from the Holy One, and they knew all things; and John wrote not unto them as not knowing the truth, but because they knew it. chap. ii. 18. 20, 21. Yea, they had received the anointing, and it did abide in them, and they needed not that any man should teach them, but as the same anointing taught them of all things; and it so taught them, as that no seducer nor antichristian deceiver could impose or prevail upon them, they keeping to it. ver. 18. 26, 27. What a glorious state was here, when the little children were thus advanced in the strength and power of life! Sure that promise was now made good indeed, "Ye shall be all taught of God," when the little children were thus taught. Yea, and they were taught to abide in him, so as they might not sin; for how could they, the anointing abiding in them, and teaching them of all things, and they being in subjection thereto; for that preserves out of sin the vessel in whom it dwells and reigns. Sin is a transgression of the law; but they that are in the anointing, taught by the anointing, subject to the anointing, are far above the righteousness of the law, even in the righteousness of the Son; the righteousness of whose nature is far above the righteousness which the law requires of man's nature. And let men talk and imagine what they will, the sinner is not in the redemption and power of righteousness which is by Jesus Christ. For that which is born of God

doth not commit sin, but the seed remaineth in him which is born of God, preserving him from the nature and spirit of the devil, and from the works which flow from that nature and spirit. chap. iii. 4, &c. Yea, they might so walk as that their hearts should not condemn them; but that they might have confidence towards God. ver. 20, 21. And as Christ said to the Father, "Father, thou always hearest me;" so could they say, "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," ver. 22. even as Christ had said, "He that sent me is with me," &c., "for I do always those things that please him." John viii. 29. Yea, these little children, having received the anointing, were able to try spirits, and had tried and overcome them (notwithstanding the subtlety and strength of all their deceits), because that light, life, Spirit, and power which dwelt within them, was greater than that which was in the world. chap. iv. 1. 4. And can the less overcome the greater, the greater keeping to its strength? Nay, nay: these that are of the love, and dwell in the love, are, by the power and virtue of the love, kept out of all the snares and devices of the enmity; for the enmity cannot enter the love, nor the soul that abides in the love; but only him that departs out of it. Here is a munition of rocks, here is safety indeed; let him that hath an ear hear, and let him that hath a spiritual eye read and consider. What should be said more of them? They were in the love which keeps the commandments, of the birth to which the victory is given, and in the faith which gives the victory. chap. v. 3, 4. Yea, did they not so keep themselves, as that the wicked one could not touch them? ver. 18. How could he, when they had overcome him, and abode in that which overcame him? Satan falls like a flash of lightning before the power of truth, before the living faith; the faith which is from and stands in the power. And if the devil would fly from those that resisted him, how much more would he fly from those that had overcome him, and stood armed with that armor which is painful and dreadful to him!

Again, the apostle that writeth to the Hebrews, speaketh of their work and labor of love (which advanceth the soul apace towards the kingdom), and of their patient enduring the trials, persecutions, afflictions, and crosses, through which perfection is attained. James i. 4. Heb. vi. 10. and chap. x. 32, 33. Yea, he speaketh expressly concerning them, that they were come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, chap. xii. 22, 23, 24. and that they had received, or were receiving, a kingdom which could not be moved. ver 28.

There is another place in my heart to mention, which speaks great glory and a high state, in the sense of my spirit, attributing glory and dominion to Christ for his loving them, and washing them from their sins in his own blood, and making them kings and priests unto God and his Father. Rev. i. 5, 6. What is he who is both a king and priest to God? Surely he is washed, surely he is clothed with the priest's raiment, surely he is in the dominion and purity of life, who reigns and offers up therein holy sacrifices to the Father.

Thus far have instances been given in reference to the general state. Now it is also in my heart to give some instances in particular churches, wherein testimony is given to the freshness of life in them, and of their precious state therein.

First, I shall instance in that church at Jerusalem: in what a beauteous glory and lustre did they spring forth! Acts ii. 41, to the end. Consider the place well, and tell me, if this was not the beginning of the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem; if the glory of it did not descend upon this new-gathered people and converts? So likewise see chap. iv. 31, &c.

The church at Rome, the apostle Paul says, were beloved

of God; and that their faith was spoken of throughout the the whole world. Rom. i. 7, 8. Now what a glorious precious state was this! For by faith is water drawn out of the wells of salvation: and how much might they draw, who abounded in faith! True faith springs from the power of life, and it brings the power of life into the soul in which it springs, according to the degree and growth of it. He that is beloved of God, and abounds in faith towards him, what glory, what life, what virtue, what power can he want?

The same apostle, writing to the church at Philippi, saith, he did *thank God, upon every remembrance of them: making request for them with joy always, in every prayer of his for them all, for their fellowship in the gospel* (which is power and life to them that have fellowship therein) *from the first day until now.* Phil. i. 3, 4, 5. And he calls them *dearly beloved and longed for, his joy and crown.* chap. iv. 1.

So writing to the saints and faithful brethren at Colossus, he gives *thanks for their faith, and their love to all the saints,* chap. i. 3, 4. And saith further concerning them, *that the word of the truth of the gospel had brought forth fruit in them, since the day they heard and knew the grace of God, in truth.* ver. 5. 6. To what then were they grown? Surely very far into the mystery of life in Christ; in whom they had been circumcised and baptized, and were complete, abiding in him, and drinking in of the life, virtue, and power which floweth from him.

Likewise he writes to the church of the Thessalonians, as being in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. i. 1. Ah! how excellent and glorious was the state and condition of Christ, to be in the Father! How glorious is the state of that church, which is both in Christ and in the Father! He speaks also of their work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope. ver. 3. Yea, he writes to them again as such. Ephes. i. 1. Surely they did abide in the vine; they did dwell in the name and power into which they were gathered; and so did feel the dews from above, and the springs from beneath; so that their faith did grow exceedingly, and their love abound; and the

apostles did find cause of glorying in them, in the churches of God, for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they endured. ver. 3, 4.

Writing also to the Ephesians, he giveth a high expression of the goodness of God to his people in those days, and of the blessedness of their estate, in that God had blessed them *with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ*, chap. i. 3. That is hard to be understood; yet this may be sensibly said: in the heavenly places in Christ, the spiritual blessings are received; and they that are raised together with him, and live in and with him, do also sit with him in the heavenly places in him, even in the mansions which he hath prepared, and is preparing; for he raiseth the soul higher and higher, from glory to glory, at his pleasure. The apostle also saith that they were *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;* and were *built together in Christ, for a habitation of God, through the Spirit.* chap. ii. 19. 22.

So the church of Smyrna; Christ owneth her works, and tribulations, and poverty, and pronounceth her rich. Rev. ii. 8. Christ knoweth how to value things.

And the church of Philadelphia was in a very precious state indeed; Christ owning her works, and having set before her an open door, which no man could shut; and promising to make those who made a profession of the truth (of being Jews) but were not in it, to come and worship before her feet, and to know that he had loved her; as also that he would keep her in the hour of temptation, because she had kept the word of his patience. Rev. iii. 8. &c. Thus it is manifest that the church in general, and many churches in particular, was once in a pure, fresh, living, powerful, glorious state.

II. Of the Church in its declining and falling Estate.

But all the churches were not thus; nor did those who were thus always continue thus: but there was a declining and falling from this glorious estate by degrees, even from the light, brightness, purity, and power of the day, into the darkness and corruption of the night again.

And thus the apostasy came in; to wit, by not keeping to the anointing, by not abiding in that Spirit, life, and power whereinto they were gathered; by not keeping singly to the voice of the Shepherd. For then another ear got up in them, and that itched after new and strange things; not being contented with the simplicity of truth which is in Christ, with the plain heavenly bread. For truth is a naked simple thing to look at; not answering man's wisdom at first, nor ever afterwards: but in the cross to that, its power is felt, and its beauty seen. But if the wisdom of man get up from under the cross, if it be not still kept down by that, it will presently be judging the wisdom of God, and the plain way of truth, foolishness, and be listening after somewhat else.

Thus the church of Corinth, who did abound in spiritual gifts, yet were apt to run out, and be lifted up above their measures, and think they reigned as kings, without (if not beyond) the apostles; and so came into danger of hearkening to false spirits and ministers of unrighteousness. 1 Cor. iv. 8, &c. 2 Cor. x. 11.

And the churches of Galatia, which began well, and very zealously, even so as they could have plucked out their eyes for Paul's sake; yet were afterwards so far bewitched and prevailed upon, that the apostle professed he stood in doubt of them, and was afraid lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain. Gal. iv. 11. 20.

When the enemy could not prevail in open battle, by manifest afflictions, oppositions, persecutions, &c., then he tries by deceit, getting into the form, to see what he can do

there, how he can please and satisfy men therewith, and so work them from that power which redeems. And those that do not eye the power, keep to the power, walk in the power, and judge by the power, to be sure he catcheth this way. "The false prophets," saith Christ, "which come in sheep's clothing," (with the good words, as ministers of righteousness; but not with the living, powerful fruits of righteousness) come with so subtle an appearance, as, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect: but God keepeth that eye in his elect open, which cannot be deceived; but all else are. They that depart from the power, they that err from the faith, they that are in the highmindedness and conceitedness, out of the fear,—they easily hearken to seducing spirits, and drink of their poison. And Peter plainly foresaw that these would be many. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

See also what complaint Paul makes to Timothy, about the declining of many from the truth; he exhorts him to "keep faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander." 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

Again, he speaks of some that were "already turned aside after Satan." chap. v. 15. And of some that had "erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." chap. vi. 10. Again: "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." 2 Tim. i. 15. Likewise he speaks of some, who "would increase unto more ungodliness," and whose word "will eat as doth a canker," chap. ii. 16, 17. and that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." chap. iii. 13. Yea, "the time will come," saith he, "when they will not endure sound doctrine." chap. iv. 3. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world." ver. 10. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works." ver. 14. "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." ver. 16. Surely love was grown very cold, iniquity likely to abound, and the apostasy from the truth to increase.

And among the churches of Asia, how many of them were warping! Ephesus, though she had much good remaining in her, yet she had left her first love, and was fallen from her first state and works. Rev. ii. 4, 5. Pergamos also had them which held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing Christ hated. ver. 15. Thyatira, she likewise suffered the woman Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce God's servants. ver. 20. (Now, this she ought not to have done, the churches having the Spirit, the holy anointing, to try spirits and prophets by; yea, to try apostles; which will faithfully discover which are truly such, and which are not, as ver. 2.) Sardis had a name that she lived, but was generally dead; there being but a few names left in Sardis which had not defiled their garments. chap. iii. 1. 4. Laodicea was lukewarm; neither cold nor hot; in the profession, in the form and appearance of truth; but without zeal, without life, without power. ver. 15. Now being in this state (having the form and appearance of all), she judged herself rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing. ver. 17. This indeed is a pleasant state in man's eye, but very loathsome to God. ver. 16. This church seemed to have all, but indeed had lost all, and wanted the gold, the raiment, and the eye-salve; and so was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. ver. 17, 18.

In this declining state some fell from the doctrine of truth, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Some from the fellowship and worship; it being the manner of some to forsake the assembling themselves together, Heb. x. 25. which the church, when first gathered, was very diligent in. Acts ii. 42. 46. Some held the form of knowledge and profession, but fell from the life and power. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Yea, many ways did the wolfish, false spirits drive and scatter from the flock, as they could get entrance into men's minds.

Obj. But how could the church decline thus in the apostles' days; the Spirit of God being so powerful in the apos-

tles, and being also so generally then bestowed upon believers? as Gal. iv. 6.

Ans. It is true, they had great advantages of standing, by reason of the presence and power of the Spirit with them. But yet withal, the Spirit of the Lord is tender, jealous, and might be grieved and provoked by neglects (his warnings being slighted, and his motions quenched), and so might draw back from such, as either received not the truth in the love of it, or grew cold and careless afterwards: and then the spirit of darkness and deceit thereby had advantage to blind them, gain upon them, and enter into that part of them, which the Spirit of the Lord had before recovered and possessed. Now, the enemy, having got entrance, prevails and captivates more and more, unless the Lord, in tender love and mercy, visit it again, lifting up a standard for the soul, and so drawing it back by degrees into his light and power again.

Besides, it is easy to decline (easy for any soul, easy for any church); but there is need of much care, fear, faith, obedience, watchfulness to the Lord, and against the enemy, &c., to preserve and keep the estate of a heart, or the estate of a church, chaste and pure. "Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Can any thing preserve a soul or church, but God's power? And doth God preserve any soul or church, but in the way he hath appointed? A church is like a garden, needs digging, dressing, watering, sun-shine, to cause it to thrive and flourish. Do not weeds easily spring up in a garden? yea, ranker weeds than in common ground; which spread apace and over-run it faster, if it be not looked to and kept by the gardener? Read the figure, and understand. Are not spiritual weeds as corrupt and spreading as the outward? Are they not like leaven; have they not a poisonous, infecting nature in them? "Know ye not," saith the apostle, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" 1 Cor. v. 6. If but one root of bitterness spring up in a church, it may defile many, and trouble the whole. Heb. xii. 15. And as one corrupted person, so also one corrupted church, may infect

and poison many more. Yea, was it not thus in the apostasy? When it once got head, did it not break in and overflow apace?

III. Of the declined and fallen State of the Church.

When antichrist (or that spirit which wrought against that spiritual appearance of Christ, and power of his truth) was revealed, and got into the temple, appearing and being acknowledged there as God, then, without controversy, was the declined state. He had been a long while working under-ground by his agents and ministers, appearing as ministers of righteousness, in a form thereof, out of and against the power; but the power (in the true apostles and ministers) stood in his way, and wrought against him, so as he could not for a long time get up. Yet he prevailed more and more in the corrupt part in men, till at length he drew many of the very stars from heaven after him; and then fighting an open battle, gets rid of the true church, vomits out a flood after her, as if she were an harlot, and not worthy the name of Christ's spouse, and so gets into the temple, and is owned there (as Christ) in the stead of Christ.

Object. Will any man own antichrist, worship antichrist, and acknowledge antichrist (instead of Christ) to be God.

Ans. Read 2 Thess. ii. 4. and see if it be not so. See if he do not get into the temple, and sit ruling and governing in the temple (that which was once so, and ought still to be so), till the very coming and appearing of Christ in his Spirit and brightness. ver. 8.

Quest. But how could this possibly ever be, or how can it be?

Ans. He doth not directly get up, nor show himself directly as he is; but in a mystery of deceit. He doth not appear as antichrist, crying up all manner of filthiness, abomination, and contrariety to Christ, in direct words, but as Christ, preaching righteousness, crying up scriptures, ordi-

name, church, ministry, holiness, &c. Yet, for all these words and fair pretences, he is not the true spirit, but the false, the antichristian; and those that receive him, or bow to him in any of these, they bow not to Christ, but to him. He hath a mark, he hath a name, he hath a worship, he hath a church, he hath a ministry, he hath laws and ordinances of worship; which whosoever receives, worships not the Lord Jesus Christ, but that spirit which, under a disguise, thus appeareth, which hath horns as it were of a lamb, or like a lamb; but not the Lamb's horns, nor the Lamb's nature, nor the Lamb's Spirit, nor the Lamb's meekness; but the old nature of the dragon, who gives him both subtlety and power.

Now mark: when Christ brought forth his church, it was a pure, holy, spiritual building, built up of renewed spirits; such as were new-born, such as were washed, such as were sanctified, such as were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Christ's church was Zion, even the holy seed, built upon the holy hill of God, into a holy city or temple. But antichrist's church is Babylon, which hath the wisdom and order of man in it, such as man's eye judgeth right, but is foolishness and confusion in the eye of God. Now, the Lord hath most terrible plagues to pour out upon this antichrist, and upon his Babylon; yea, upon every one that hath his mark or name, or that which amounts to his name, though it be not directly so called. Therefore, oh, fear the Lord God! and ye that love the peace of your souls, pray to be delivered from that which his wrath is to; for the dregs of the cup of trembling are to be poured out on antichrist inward and outward, and on Babylon inward and outward. Let him that readeth understand the tender warnings, which are given forth in the tender nature and Spirit of the Lord; for the day of mercy spreads apace, and the night of anguish and tribulation hastens.

The true church of Christ was gathered by his Spirit into his name and power, and was a spiritual building, or building of spirits therein; wherein the Spirit of the Lord was

as present spiritually, as ever he appeared in the outward temple or ark outwardly. And the ministers of the New Testament were made by the Spirit, and sent forth by the Spirit, and in the power. "Stephen," though but a deacon, "was full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost;" and if any man taught in the church, he was to "speak as an oracle of God." Flesh is to be silent there, and only the Spirit's voice to be heard in the spiritual building. But now, in the apostasy, the ministers there, are as wells without water, clouds without rain, who have only the show of the thing after the flesh, but not the truth of the thing after the Spirit; and so being not in the thing, nor in the Spirit, they despise the dominion, and speak evil of the dignities which are of the Spirit, and for advantage' sake cry up the dominions and dignities which are of the earth.

In the apostles' days, the ministers of the church were not of man, nor set over the flock by man; but made by God, and set over the flock as overseers by him. Acts xx. 28. For the same Lord who gave apostles, prophets, and evangelists, gave also pastors and teachers. Ephes. iv. 11. And though the hands of the presbytery were laid on those that were made ministers; yet that was not done suddenly, or lightly, but by the guidance of God's Spirit; and there went a gift and power of the Spirit along with it, according as Paul said to Timothy: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." 1 Tim. iv. 14. But now, in the declined, fallen estate, there is no such thing; but an empty form, a form of worship, a form of godliness, a form of ministry, a form of doctrine, a form of discipline; without the life, without the Spirit, without the power, from which the true form came, and whereby alone it could be preserved.

This declined state hath been a very sink of iniquity, wherein the Christian love hath not only grown cold, but hath been quite dead, and plucked up by the very roots; yea, wherein all that filthiness which was sprouting forth and getting up in the declining state hath reigned in power,

defiling the very name of Christianity, oppressing the good seed, and corrupting the earth. Read 2 Tim. iii. 2, &c., and see what a generation of Christian professors were to grow up (and did grow up) in the time of the apostasy.

IV. Of the State of the Church in its Recovery; or what State the Church shall be in after it is recovered out of the Apostasy.

THE state of the church *after* the apostasy, is to be like the state it was in *before* the apostasy, for purity, power, brightness, and glory, &c.; yea, shall it not be more glorious, after its coming through all this darkness, and shining over it, than it was before? The New Jerusalem is to come down from God out of heaven; the bride is to be clothed and adorned as the Lamb's wife, meet for the delight of her husband. The power and Spirit of the Lord, which cleanseth away all this rubbish, will make his truth shine, his church shine, his suffering lambs, that come out of the great tribulation, shine more than ever before. The Lord God Omnipotent will take his great power unto him to reign, and will reign according to his power in the hearts of his children, and over the earth. He will break that which stands in his way with a rod of iron; and he will embrace and exalt that which boweth to and kisseth the sceptre of his Son, who is to appear upon the holy hill of Zion: and the law is to go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; the power whereof shall break down the power of iniquity, and bring up the suffering seed into the dominion and glory of life.

In this restored state antichrist shall be worshipped no more, nor the beast, nor the dragon, who gave his power to the beast; but the Lord God shall be worshipped and magnified over all. It shall be said no more, Who can make war with the beast? after the Lamb hath overcome him; but, Who is like to thee, O Lord, O King of saints! who hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned, and

dost reign; who hast brought down this lofty city, and trod it under the feet of the poor, and made the steps of the needy to pass over it; who hast made it an heap, (the city fenced by all the might, wisdom, and power of man), a ruinous heap, a place no more for thy dear children to be captived in and oppressed; but a habitation of dragons, and a cage of every unclean and noisome bird for ever?—Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. Rev. xv. 4. Thou hast judged down Babylon, which was exalted; thou hast pitied Zion, which lay in the dust for many ages and generations, and hast raised up thine holy building again, and wilt give to thy children to be clothed, and to walk before thee in pure white linen (which is the righteous nature and Spirit of thy Son) for evermore; and the darkness shall never come over them again, but the beast, dragon, and false prophet shall be cast into, and bound down in, the lake; and the springs of life shall open, and whosoever will may come freely, and drink of the water of life. And the people in heaven shall say, "Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God."

And the voice of great multitudes, and the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunders, shall say, "Hallelujah!" and shall be glad, and rejoice, and shall give honor to the Lord; for the bride's marriage with the Lamb, and for her rich adorning for her bridegroom. Yea, the earth shall rejoice, and the multitudes of the isles be glad. Why so? Because the Lord reigns, who is tender even of the earth, and hates the oppressing not only of his seed, but also of his creatures: for he will reign and judge in righteousness, and tenderness, and much mercy to all that is of him; and none shall feel his judgment and severity, but that which is contrary to him, and joineth to his enemy. For the Lord will make war with that spirit, which is contrary to his life and nature, for ever and ever. And he that joineth to that spirit, shall find woe, misery, and tribulation (tribulation and anguish shall light upon every soul that

continues in the evil doing); but he that comes from under that spirit by the leadings of God's Spirit, bowing to and kissing the Son, shall taste of the Father's love to the Son, and partake of the mercy, peace, and reconciliation which is treasured up in him. Amen.

THE WAY OF SALVATION IN THE COVENANT OF LIFE OPENED:

And some stumbling-blocks removed out of the way of the Simple-hearted.

THERE are many whom the Lord hath raised up, in this day of the manifestation of his power, and of his everlasting love, to bear witness to his truth; among whom I also (who was an outcast, and miserable beyond expression) have obtained mercy to partake of the virtue, life, and power of his precious truth, which redeems from the bondage of sin and iniquity; and am also many times moved by the Lord to testify of that which he hath made known unto me, and given me to experience.

This brief touch sprang in me by way of preface. Now to the thing itself.

The Father, in whom is the whole virtue and power of redemption, sent his Son to gather the scattered and lost sheep of the house of Israel; and not only so, but he gave him also for a light to the Gentiles, that he might be his salvation to the ends of the earth; and sending him, he sent his Spirit and power with him: for that which is begotten by the Father is not able to do the work, unless anointed and assisted by the Father: therefore the Father, who sent him to preach the gospel, anointed him, and filled him with his Spirit, that he might preach the gospel according to that scripture, Isai. lxi. 1, 2, 3: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; to pro-

claim the acceptable year of our Lord, and to comfort all that mourn," &c.

Quest. But how came these meek, these broken-hearted, these captives, these bound in prison, these mourners, to meet with the redemption and blessings which he is anointed to preach to them? Or which way do they come to receive and partake of them from him?

Ans. In faith. This all his outward healings did signify, being thus dispensed. ("If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God. Thy faith hath made thee whole. O woman! great is thy faith! be it unto thee according to thy faith.") And thus all his inward healings are bestowed upon and received by the soul; to wit, in the faith.

Quest. But how came they to have faith? Or how cometh any man to have faith in the redeeming power?

Ans. It is bestowed upon them by God, in the sense which is from him. His Word goeth forth from his mouth; there is a witness of him in the heart, towards which it reacheth. Now, it reaching to the witness, immediately it brings into a sense, and in that sense begets faith; and being mixed with this faith (which is of its own begetting) in them that hear it, begins the work of life and redemption in that heart where it is not yet begun, or carries it on in that heart wherein it is already begun. Thus faith hath a work, a work from the beginning of the heart's turning to God even to the end; which he that abides in the faith till the end, finds accomplished.

Obj. But this faith is bestowed on some few whom God hath elected, not on all men.

Ans. God hath sent his gospel to be preached to every creature, and his Word is able to reach the witness, and work sense in every creature; and in whomsoever there is a sense wrought, they listening to God in that sense, he works faith in them; and waiting on the Word, hearkening to the Word, and staying their minds there through on the Lord, he will speak peace to them, and keep them in peace, daily removing them more and more out of the reach and power of that which troubleth them.

Quest. Doth the new covenant lay all upon God, and require nothing of the creature? Or is there something required by God of the creature, in and by virtue of the new covenant?

Ans. Consider well; Doth not God require of the creature in the new covenant what he gives in the new covenant? Doth he not require the faith, and the exercising of that faith, which he himself works and gives in the sense, from the power and demonstration of his truth, to the soul? The new covenant requires more of the creature than ever the old did; but it requires them not of the creatures as weak in the fall, but as taught (strengthened and enabled) to walk with God in and by virtue of the covenant. Yea, all manner of holiness, and righteousness of heart, life, and conversation is required in and by the new covenant: for as the Lord works out of all therein in the creature, so the creature works out all thereby in the Lord, according to that known scripture, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And as the creature is able to do nothing that is good of itself; so being grown up into the life and ability, which is of God, it is able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth it.

Quest. But why is it said that Christ was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, the meek, the broken-hearted, the captives, the bound in prison, the mourners (for want of righteousness, life, and peace)? Did not God give his Son in love to all? Was he not made a ransom and propitiation for all? Yea, was he not anointed to preach the gospel to all? How then comes it here to be thus limited and restrained to some?

Ans. It is true, God had a general respect to mankind, in the gift and anointing of his Son: but yet there are some in a better capacity to receive; already in the sense of the want of him, and panting and longing after him. Yea, there are some, who are grievously sick in soul, and deeply wounded in spirit; the sadness and misery of whose condition cries aloud for the help of the physician. Now the eye

and heart of the Lord is more especially towards these; and so he bids his prophets be instructing and comforting these, concerning the salvation, the healing, the oil of gladness, the Messiah to come; and when he comes, he sends him up and down to seek out these, to keep company with these, to help and relieve these; having given him the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to these weary, distressed ones. These are not like the common, rough, unhewn, knotty, rugged earth; but like earth prepared for the seed, and so easily and naturally receive it. The gospel is preached to others at a distance; which, it is true, they may have, if they will hearken to it, and wait for it, and part with what must first be parted with; but they have a great way to travel thither. But these are near the kingdom; these are near that which opens, and lets in life; these are quickly reached to, melted, and brought into the sense, in which with joy they receive the faith; and with the faith the power; which brings righteousness and salvation to their souls. Though also the enemy is exceeding busy, to darken, disturb, and bow down these; that he might still keep them in the doubts, in the fears, in the chains, in the fetters, in the prison-house, from the liberty and healing which the word of the anointing brings.

Now mind. God is real towards all; he desires the life and salvation of all; not the destruction of any one soul that ever he created: it is unnatural to him. And the way that he holds forth, he stands ready to meet any man in. Whom is it that he doth not draw? And who is it that may not come in the drawing? Is not his word a hammer? And whom can it not break? Is it not fire? And whose corruption can it not burn up? Is it not water, wine, and blood? And whom cannot it wash and nourish? Therefore, let no man think to lay the blame upon God, because of his perishing; for he will be deceived therein: and God will prove true, who saith, *Man's destruction is of himself;* and every man a liar, who layeth any blame on him, for not giving him further assistance with his power. Neither let him blame God for hardening him; for God hardeneth no man,

but him who first refuseth and grieveth the power and love which would melt and soften him. It is true; we are the clay, and God the potter: and may not the potter make what vessels he will of his clay? This parable came from the Spirit of the Lord to Israel of old: but what use did the Lord make of it? Did he say to them: Do what ye will; some of you I will cast off, and others of you I will show mercy to; for I have determined so? Nay, not so: but I have this power over you; therefore do not provoke me. [Read Jer. xviii.] Was not God exceeding tender to the outward people, in that outward covenant? Did he ever give them up to pain and sufferings, without great provocations on their parts? "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Wherefore doth a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins?- Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." And the Spirit of the Lord never failed to do what was his part, towards the turning them from iniquity, towards the Lord, in that covenant.

And when they did believe, consent, and obey, and did eat the good of the land, was it not pleasant and delightful to him? And when they provoked him to jealousy, and drew down judgments upon their heads, was it not irksome and painful to him? [Read Deut. v. 29. Isa. v. Ezek. xx. Jer. xliv. 4. and chap. xxxi. 20. Isa. lxiii. 7. to ver. 15.] And will God fail to do his part towards any man for the salvation of his soul, which is so precious, of so great concern, and the loss whereof he knoweth to be so invaluable? No, no; the Spirit of God suffers, in every man upon the face of the earth, that sins against him; and is grieved and wounded by their unjust and unrighteous conversations, from day to day, against the testimony of somewhat of him in them, which is contrary thereto. Now this is of a precious nature; and being so despised and rejected by men, can it be wondered that God doth not proceed to make it more manifest, and to work more in men by it? Nay, may it not rather be wondered that God doth continue to manifest it so much? What man could endure to behold a thing so

precious in his eyes (as this is in God's) so continually abused by, and to suffer so much from, that which is so far beneath it, as God daily doth? Therefore, if there come a day of reckoning for this, with all men upon the face of the earth (for who hath not had a talent from God; even of the pure eternal light in him, witnessing in his heart and conscience against the darkness?), there will be no cause of wondering at it. And is not this light and Spirit (which shines in all men's darkness in some measure, stirring and witnessing against it, and endeavoring to persuade and draw the mind from it) the very same, in nature and kind, with the light and Spirit of the Father, which appeared in that person of Christ? And, if hearkened unto, and followed, would it not bring into union and fellowship with him, and into a partaking of the benefit of all he did in that body? Yea, would not the Spirit reveal whatever is necessary to be known, to that soul which receives and follows it? Oh, what hath God done (in his rich and tender mercy towards all) for mankind! And how clear will he be, when he opens and manifests the righteousness of his judgment! He will not clear himself after this manner; that he hath disposed of them to destruction, according to the power and prerogative of his will; but that they have run headlong into destruction, against the light and leadings of his will and power; to which it is natural to save, but not to destroy. That is the act which is proper to another nature and spirit, but strange to his.

Object. But could not God save any if he would? Who can resist his will or his power? Who can stop or resist him in the work of redemption, or destruction?

Ans. God can so put forth his will and power, as none can resist. Yea, the will and power of God, which offereth to save, and standeth ready to save, will bring destruction upon all that so dally with it, as to neglect and let pass the day of their visitation: and thus none can resist his will, or his power. But in the way wherein he appeareth, and hath chosen to work out life and salvation, Satan, and man's corrupt heart and mind, may and do often resist the

will and power of the Lord. Now, that which resisteth is not of God, but against him; yet it is the patience of the Lord, to suffer it. I find drawings in my heart from God, or I durst not open these things. For I dare not hold out to men what the Lord hath given me to know and experience, but only what he giveth and chooseth for me to hold out: and that will be life to them that receive it. But if I should hold out any thing of myself, that would not reach to life, but only feed the wrong part in men; and so help to build up that, which God will again throw down, before he saves that soul which is built up with the knowledge of things after this manner.

There is somewhat springs up in my heart, which may perhaps open this thing further to the minds of some.

Cain was the first wicked man that we read of; and how tender was God towards him! even him that sacrificed not after the Spirit, but after the flesh, and slew his brother Abel. Now, can any man lay Cain's wickedness either upon the will, or upon the decree and counsel of God? Might he not have done well? Might he not have sacrificed to God in the faith, as well as his brother Abel? And if he had done well, and offered in the faith, had he not found forgiveness and acceptance with the Lord? God accepteth no man's person: God rejecteth no man's person; but there is a seed he hath chosen; and to gather man into this seed, is his delight and work; as it is the delight, nature, and work of another spirit to scatter from this seed.

Now, in this seed he doth accept, and not out of it. Yea, in this seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, as they are gathered into and abide in it. And this seed is a word nigh in the mouth and heart, both of Jew and Gentile; which, as it is hearkened to, writes the law of the spirit of life in the heart, either of Jew or Gentile. And as they become sons, so the Spirit of the Father is poured out upon them; even the Spirit of adoption, which crieth *Abba, Father*, either in Jew or Gentile. And this is the gospel of the kingdom, which is preached more sparingly, or abundantly, by the mouth of the seed, as the Lord pleaseth.

For God's power, wisdom, mercy, love, goodness, patience, long-suffering, &c. is his own; and he may sow of it, or exercise it, more sparingly or abundantly, as he pleaseth. Yea, he doth exercise it more abundantly towards the vessels of mercy; so that the cause of their salvation doth not so much arise from their embracing of mercy, as from God's exercising of it. He visiteth nations as he pleaseth, and persons in nations as he pleaseth; and who may say unto him, *What dost thou? Why art thou so good and kind here?* or, *Why art thou so sharp and severe there?* But still in the way, and according to the path, of the covenant, doth the Lord walk, in and towards all: and his mercy endureth for ever towards the seed of the righteous, and his justice and indignation for ever towards the seed of the evil-doer: and man (simply considered) is not either of these; but as he is gathered into, and brought forth in, the root and spirit of either of these. Now, every man hath a day for the life of his soul; and power and mercy is near him, to help him to travel from death to life. Happy is he who is taught of God to make use of it.

And let not men puzzle themselves about the mystery of *election* and *reprobation;* which cannot be understood by such as are out of the thing wherein it is made manifest. Only thus at present: Pharaoh and Israel, Esau and Jacob, Ishmael and Isaac, &c. were parables, signifying somewhat inward. What was Pharaoh? Was he not the oppressor of God's Israel? What was Esau? Was he not the first birth, which sold the birth-right and inheritance? What was Ishmael? Was he not the birth after the flesh? These are rejected, and cast off by God for ever; and the spiritual Israel, the spiritual Jacob, the spiritual Isaac, are accepted.

Shall I speak out this thing yet more plain? Why thus then: it is not the creature which is rejected by its Maker; but somewhat in the creature, and the creature in that. Nor is it the creature (simply) which is elected; but somewhat in the creature, and the creature in that. And as any man comes into that, the election is begun in him: and as any man abides in that, he abides in the election: and as

that is made sure to any man, his calling and election are made sure to him. But as any man departs from that, he departs from the election into the reprobation: and going on in that into the full impenitency and hardness, he will for ever miss of the election; and the reprobation, and sealing up to condemnation, will be made sure to him. For God is no respecter of persons; but everywhere, he that receiveth his holy seed, and therein worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. And he that receiveth the wicked seed, and therein worketh wickedness and unrighteousness, is with it rejected.

Obj. But (may the honest heart say) this may be truth for aught I know; but indeed I did not apprehend things to be so: for I thought man and his works had been wholly excluded by the covenant of grace; but this seems to take both him and them in upon a consideration.

Ans. Man is wholly excluded the covenant of grace, as in himself; as he stands in himself, and in his own ability, out of the newness of life and ability which is of the new covenant. But he is not excluded as he is renewed, and receiveth a new being, life, virtue, and ability, in the new covenant. But here much is required of him; and whatever he thus doth is owned, acknowledged, and accepted by God. Here the true Jew hath praise of God. He is commended for his faith, and for his obedience in the faith: for his loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself: for his washing his garments in the blood of the Lamb, and keeping them clean in the same blood, while others defile theirs: for his merciful nature and actions to Christ in his members, while others are rough and cruel: for his watching against snares and temptations, while others are running into them: for his crucifying that in himself, which others feed in themselves: yea, for his denying and turning from all ungodliness and worldly lusts, even of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life; all which are not of the Father (whom he is born of and seeks after), but of the spirit of the world, which the earthly-minded man is born of, and seeks to please. So that (mark)

though man is excluded in his corrupt nature and state, yet not the new man, not man in the regeneration. But man must be regenerated; and thus man must enter into the covenant of life; and thus man must abide and be found in the covenant of life, in the nature, in the righteousness, in the holiness, in the power thereof, if ever God own him.

Obj. But this seems to lay difference on man's act, and not wholly on the grace of God. For the grace, in itself, is equally powerful towards all; but it is my receiving of it, which maketh it effectual unto me; which others not receiving, it is not so to them.

Ans. The grace, in itself, is of its own nature everywhere. This is true. And that it hath power in it everywhere, and that this power is over and above sin; this is true also. But yet there is a greater or lesser proportion of it given, according to the pleasure and good-will of the giver: and according to the measure of it (which is freely given), and the soul's growth therein, so is the power of it manifested in the heart.

Now, the difference in every man is by the grace: not of himself; for he can do nothing that is good, as of himself; but only by the grace, which is alone able to work that which is good in him, and to cause him to work in it. Yet thus it is: as the grace reacheth to him, draweth him, quickening and causing him, in the virtue, life, and obedience of the grace, to answer the grace; so doth the work thereof go on in him. And there is matter of condemnation to him who doth not answer the grace; and there is matter of justification and praise to him who doth answer the grace. Yet this whole ability arising not from himself, but from the grace, the acknowledgment of what is effected thereby doth of right and due belong to the grace. And therefore they who are justified, sanctified, and crowned by the grace, do of right and due cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb, at the throne of grace; giving honor and glory to him who is worthy, and to his grace which hath wrought all in them.

Now, if any man would know this thing groundedly and

certainly, let him not run into disputes of the mind and brain, but come to heart experience. Hast thou ever found the work of God's grace in thy heart? Hast thou found thy heart, at any time, believe and obey, in and through the strength of the grace? Hast thou found thy heart, at another time, negligent of or rebellious against the grace? When thou wert rebellious, wert not thou condemned, and that justly too? When thou didst believe and obey, to whom did the honor thereof belong? to thee, or to the grace? Canst thou answer this? Why, as it is in thyself, between thee when obeying and disobeying, the same is the state of the case between godly and wicked men. There was a difference between thee when thou obeyedst the grace, and when thou disobeyedst it: so is there between the unregenerate and regenerate. When thou obeyedst not, that which called for obedience condemned thee; so it doth them. When thou obeyedst, thou didst sensibly feel the praise was not thine, but belonged to the grace which wrought in thee; so is it also in the regenerate, in whom the Lord works by his grace, and who work out their salvation through him, and make their calling and election sure in him. Leave brain knowledge, and come to true sense (where the mysteries of God are made manifest), and this will soon be easy and clear to thee. But these things were never intended by God to be found out by man's disputing wisdom; for God, who giveth the knowledge, hideth them from that part, and giveth them to the innocent, simple birth of his own Spirit.

Obj. But when the Father draweth, can any man resist or hold off? Doth not the power of the Lord make any man willing, whom he exerciseth his power towards? And is it not thereupon said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power"?

Ans. The power of the Lord is great, and hath dominion over all evil spirits that can tempt, and over all the corruptions, backslidings, and withdrawings of the heart. But the Father doth not save man by such an absolute act of his power (for then there would need no more to be done, but

an immediate translating of a man from death to life; which if the Lord please to do, nothing could come between to hinder); but the power of the Lord works in and according to the way that he hath appointed. And in this way the devil hath liberty and power to tempt from, oppose, and resist the work of God: and they that hearken to him, and enter into the temptation and snare which he lays, let his power in upon them, and withdraw from the virtue, operation, and strength of the power of God. Yet for all this, the Lord not only begins his work, but also carries it on in the day of his power; giving not only to will, but also to do, what is right and pleasing in his eyes; but still in and according to his own way and covenant.

Object. And so whereas some men say: If God put forth his power to save, and the devil interrupt and stop his work; then it seems that the devil is stronger than God. Is the devil stronger than God, say they? If he be not, how can he resist and withstand him in the work of his power?

Ans. Nay; the devil is not stronger than God; though he is very strong. But if the heart let in the enemy, grieve the Spirit, beat back his power in the way wherein it hath appointed to work, the devil may be more prevalent with him than the power of God. But in those that believe, and become obedient and subject to the power of God, his power is far stronger in them to defend and carry on his work, than the power of the devil is to work against and hinder it.

There are objections also relating to free-will, and falling from grace, which stick much in the spirits of many, and they cannot get over them; but it hath pleased the Lord to clear up these things to us, and to satisfy our hearts concerning them, so that with us there is no difficulty nor doubt about them.

As touching free-will: We know, from God, that man in his fallen state is spiritually dead, and hath no free-will to good; but his understanding and will are both darkened and captivated by the enemy. But in Christ there is freedom, and in his word there is power and life: and that reaching to the heart, looseneth the bands of the enemy,

and begetteth not only a freedom of mind towards good, but an inclination, desires, and breathings after it. Thus the Father draws, and thus the soul (feeling the drawing) answers in some measure; and the soul, thus coming, is welcomed by Christ, and accepted of the Father. But for all this, the enemy will tempt this soul; and the soul may hearken to, let in, and enter into the temptation, and so draw back from the plough to which it put its hand. "Now, if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," saith the Lord. "And he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven."

So concerning falling away; The Lord shows us what it is that is apt to fall, and what cannot fall. Christ cannot fall; and that which is gathered into him, stands and abides in him (and so partakes of his preservation), cannot fall. There is no breaking in upon that power, which preserves in the way that it hath appointed: but there is a running and perishing out of the way. Out of the limits of the covenant, the preservation and power of the covenant is not witnessed. But in coming to Christ in the drawings of the Father, in the sense and faith which he begets, and abiding with him that drew, in the sense and faith which he daily and freshly begets anew (for he reneweth covenant and mercy daily, and keepeth covenant and mercy for ever) in this is the power felt, the preservation felt; in this the Father's hand encompasseth the soul, which none can pluck it out of. Now he that feels and experiences these things every day, that sees and feels daily how he can fall, and how he cannot fall; how he meets with the preservation, and how he misses of the preservation; how he abides in the pure power (which is the limits of this holy covenant), and how he wanders out of this power, into the limits of another covenant, spirit, and power; he knows these things, how they are indeed; whereas other men (who are not exercised in the thing) do but guess at them; striving to comprehend them in that part which God hath shut out of them.

Now mind a parable, with which I shall conclude this.

Though the natural and outwardly-visible sun be risen ever so high upon the earth, yet he that is naturally blind cannot see it, nor partake of the light thereof. So also, though the spiritual Sun, the Sun of righteousness, the Sun of the inward world, be risen ever so high, and appear brightly in ever so many clouds; yet they that are spiritually blind cannot discern it, nor reap the benefits of his light, nor partake of the healing which is under his wings.

Some Queries Concerning the New Covenant.

Query 1. What is the covenant of hell and death, which must of necessity be broken, before a soul can be gathered into the covenant of life?

Query 2. What is the covenant of life and peace, into which God gathers the soul?

Query 3. How doth God gather? By a mere act of power, which none can resist? Or in a way wherein his power (though much resisted) shall prevail for the salvation of those, who are faithful in the covenant; who come to Christ, abide in Christ, resist and fight (in Christ) against all that is contrary to his nature and Spirit, and overcome through him?

Query 4. Are there any terms in this covenant? Or can there be any terms in this covenant, suitable to the nature of the covenant? Is believing in the power, as absolutely required in this covenant, as obedience to the law was under the covenant of the law?

Query 5. If faith in the power, and obedience to the power that redeems, be required as terms in the new covenant; yet if they be not required of the creature in its own capacity and ability, but as strengthened and enabled by the virtue, life, and power of the covenant, are they not free terms, noble terms, worthy and becoming a free covenant?

Query 6. Is not this the gospel, or new covenant: That whosoever believeth, and receiveth the baptism of the Holy

Ghost and fire,—suffering in the flesh, and having his sins and corruptions purged away by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, and so walketh no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit,—I say, is not this the gospel, or new covenant, that he that thus believeth, and is thus baptized, shall not be condemned with the world, but justified and saved by that Spirit and power which cleanseth him?

Query 7. Doth God write his laws in men's hearts, or put his fear therein, or his Spirit within them, causing them to walk in his ways and statutes, and to keep his judgments, &c.—I say, doth God do this to men out of the faith? Is not the work of salvation begun in the faith, and carried on and perfected in the faith? And he that maketh shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience, can he groundedly hope to have the work of salvation carried on in him?

Query 8. Doth not God beget, increase, and perfect the faith, which is available unto salvation? Is any man accepted in the faith, which is of his own nature? Or is the acceptation in and through the faith which is of the Son's nature?

Query 9. May the temptations of the devil, with a man's hearkening thereto, hinder God's begetting faith in him, or no? Or if it be begotten, can they hinder the growth and increase of it?

Query 10. When God draws, must a man necessarily come to the Son? Or may the devil so tempt, and he so hearken thereto, as that his coming to the Son may be hindered, notwithstanding the Father's drawing?

Query 11. Is there not justification to them that receive the seed, to them that obey the light? And is there not condemnation to them that refuse the seed, and obey not the gospel of its salvation?

Query 12. Do men perish for want of power from God? Or through their cleaving to another power, and refusing the strength of that which is over that other power; whose hand would help their souls, and bring them through and over it, did they receive it, and cleave to it in the way the Lord hath appointed?

Query 13. They that receive the power, believe in it, and live,—do they do it by their own strength? Or in the strength and virtue which flows from the power, which enlivens, draws, and makes able to follow?

Query 14. Those that are weak as to the power, and in whom the enemy and corruptions are strong,—is the defect on God's part? or on his covenant's part? Or in the way of life, which he hath pitched upon as sufficient to redeem and deliver fallen man by? Or is God (and his covenant and way of life) wholly clear of the defect, and rests it wholly on them?

An Exhortation to All People, but more especially to such as are Desolate and Distressed.

Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Now is the life arisen, and now the light shines, to guide out of the darkness and death, into the land of the living. Oh awake! ye that sleep in the dust of the earth; arise up from among the dead, and Christ shall give you light, to walk along in the path of the living. Come to him whom the Father hath sealed; who is life, and who giveth life freely to all that come; yea, abundantly, to those that wait upon him, and walk faithfully in his covenant. Oh! therefore come into covenant with him; mind the words of his lips, which beget sense, and in that sense his life stirs, and in the stirrings of his life the drawings of the Father are felt. And when the Father draws, he whomever he draws may come; and him who comes, Christ will in no wise cast out; but receive into his arms, and defend by his power, against that which would draw or force back from him into perdition. Therefore hearken to the little movings and stirrings in you, after that which is eternal; for any desire which is in truth after him, he will not quench (it is his nature to cherish it); but he will be a strength and relief to the soul, against that which would quench and put out the breathings and pantings after him, that it might still hold

the soul in bondage and captivity. And, people, mind this (it is a true testimony). The door of life is now so opened, by him who hath the key and power, that whoever will may enter. For the power of life is arisen, against the power of death and the destroyer of the soul: so that great, yea, very great advantage is there in this day, to all that are willing to follow the Leader and Captain of salvation, out of the land of captivity. Mind but his visits, and be faithful in the strength which flows from him; and nothing shall hinder thy soul from overcoming what stands in thy way, to stop thee from attaining the eternal crown and inheritance of life.

And as for you afflicted mourners, who are seeking the way to Zion, bewailing the absence of your beloved, in whose presence is life and redemption, resurrection from the dead, and victory over sin; yea, all that your hearts have desired, or can desire: what shall I say to you? O my friends, and dear brethren! May I speak a little freely to you concerning the Lord Jesus? How that he was born of the virgin Mary, according to the flesh, fulfilled his ministry and service in the flesh, and was taken up to God; and how that the same Lord Jesus was afterwards born in Spirit, of the spiritual woman, the church; even so born as to rule all nations with an iron rod; and yet did not come forth to rule the nations, but was taken up to God again, and hath not since appeared in that Spirit, power, and dominion; but only in such a strength of life, as might enable his witnesses to bear witness to him all along the apostasy, until the church should come out of the wilderness, and the manchild appear again.

And now hear the joyful news. The apostasy is ended. Mark; I do not say the apostasy is generally ended. No, no; there are many woes, plagues, judgments, and terrible thunders to come upon persons, and nations, before they feel it ended. But it is ended in some vessels, which are upon the earth. The man of sin, that wicked one, the son of perdition, hath been discovered by the Spirit of the Lord; chased, consumed, and destroyed by the breath of

his mouth, and by the brightness of his appearance in some. Yea, the church is come out of the wilderness, and the man-child is come along with her; for she is not come without her beloved, but leaning upon her beloved; and he is known ruling with his golden sceptre, and with his iron rod battering down the corrupt, selfish, stubborn, earthly spirit, and raising up that which is meek, tender, lowly, and lay bowed down and oppressed.

Now, as Christ said, preaching in the days of his flesh, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke iv. 21. Was it not then fulfilled outwardly among the outward Jews? Were there any sick, or weak, or blind, or lame, or lepers, or possessed with devils, whom he was not ready to cure? And did he not go about doing good, and seeking them out to cure them? So may it not now be said in the Spirit and power of the Lord, among the spiritual Jews, This day is this scripture fulfilled spiritually in your ears? Yea, what he did then outwardly is known in spirit to be done among you inwardly and spiritually. How many that were before blind do now see? that were before deaf do now hear? that were formerly lame do now walk? that were very leprous are now cleansed? that were very dead are now raised? that were quite dumb do now speak? And the poor, the empty, the naked, are now clothed, and filled with the riches and treasures of the everlasting kingdom. May it not be truly said, by many poor, distressed hearts, that the wilderness and solitary place is now glad, because that which once was parched with drought and barrenness now feels the living springs, and the breaking forth of the pure, clear river of life, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, and cause melody in the heart to the Lord? Where is the envious, cruel, dragonish nature? may some say. Yea, where is the place where dragons lay? Is there not a new creation?—a new heaven, a new earth; and are not all things become new therein? Are not the old things of the night, and of the darkness, passed away, and all things become new in this day, which the Lord hath made,

in the hearts which have received and been subject to his light?

And now what hinders, but that ye also should lift up your heads, and see the coming of the Son of man in the clouds wherein he comes, and partake of the redemption, virtue, and power of his appearance? What are the clouds wherein he comes? Is his coming outward? Or are the clouds outward? Or is his coming inward and spiritual in ten-thousands of his saints? Did not Enoch see that he was to come so to judge the world? Doth he not come to be glorified in his saints? Are not they to judge the world?—they in him, he in them? Oh! read aright; read with the Spirit, and with the understanding which is thereof; and then the truth of the letter will be manifest and shine in you. There is nothing stands in your way, but want of a spiritual eye to see his spiritual appearance in others (and so to wait for it in yourselves), even the eye of faith, which sees the invisible power and glory, as the Lord openeth it, and maketh manifest to it.

Now, this I have to say to you, in true sense and understanding: Come down to the Gentile's light, come down to that which God hath dispensed to the Gentile, as well as to the Jew; which is *the word* (or commandment) *nigh in the mouth and heart.* This hath been the lowest of all, despised by all; and this is in the heart of God to exalt over all; for it is above all. The lowest in its descent from the Father; the highest in its ascent to the Father. This is the thing which man ran from, when the veil came over him; which all the shadows of the law were to point out and signify. And as man is brought again to this, life springs in him, and the powerful redemption of the eternal word is witnessed by him. Yea, he that hears the voice of this, though he were ever so dead in trespasses and sins, shall feel life spring in him, and the covenant of life inwardly revealed, which, by the pure faith and obedience, is the entrance into, and the abiding in. And this is the one truth, the one pure, eternal word and way to the Father, which was from the beginning, and remains the same unto the end. This

is the door, at which all hitherto have entered into life, at which all do still enter, and there is no other. Blessed for ever is he, who hath made it so manifest and plain in this our day; and blessed are they that see it, and enter into life at it!

A VISIT

Of tender and upright love

TO SUCH AS, AMONG THE MANY PROFESSIONS AND WAYS OF RELIGION, RETAIN ANY MEASURE OF SINCERITY OF HEART, AND TRUE DESIRES AFTER THE LORD.

THE main thing in religion is to receive a principle of life from God, whereby the mind may be changed, and the heart made able to understand the mysteries of his kingdom, and to see and walk in the way of life; and this is the travail of the souls of the righteous, that they may abide, grow up, and walk with the Lord in this principle; and that others also, who breathe after him, may be gathered into, and feel the virtue of, the same principle.

But there is one that stands in the way to hinder this work of the Lord, who, with great subtlety, strives to keep souls in captivity, and to prejudice them against the precious living appearances of the redeeming power of the Lord.

One great way whereby he doth this is by raising up in them a fear lest they should be deceived and betrayed, and instead of obtaining more, lose that little of God which they have. With this I was exercised long; and still, when life stirred in my heart, then this fear was raised in me; so that I durst not in judgment close with what, secretly in spirit, I felt to be of God, it having a true touch of his quickening, warming, convincing, enlivening virtue in it.

Now, that this snare may be escaped by such as breathe after the Lord, oh! let them wait, mourn, and cry to him, that he would write his pure fear in their hearts, and teach

them when to fear, and how to fear, and what to fear; and in that (or as that is brought forth in them) they shall see that they have more cause to fear their present state, than to fear that which, in the quickening warmth and virtue of God, comes to make a change in their present state; yea, they shall then see how the enemy now causeth them to fear, where no fear is; and keepeth them from fearing, where the fear is. For what is the ground of fear now? This is the great thing that they should fear, lest they should not hear the call of the Spirit of the Lord out of Babylon; out of that part of Babylon out of which they have not yet travelled; and lest they should not hear and mind the call of his Spirit unto Zion, the holy mount of God, towards and unto which he leadeth his people, in this day of the revelation and manifestation of his glorious love and power.

Oh! therefore, my friends, ye that long after the Lord, ye that desire to feel the power of his truth, wait for the principle of life from him to be revealed in you, and the pure fear which is therefrom, that ye may feel the Lord thereby and therein (even in and through that principle) writing his fear, his pure fear, his holy fear, his powerfully-preserving fear, in your hearts; that ye may know the way to him, the seed (which is the way), may come and join to him therein, and never depart from him. The fear of the Lord, from the principle of his life, will, without fail, effect this in you as ye receive it from the Lord; but the other fear, the fear which the enemy begets, will not do it; but will be a bar and sore stop in your way, till the Lord, by his holy power, through his tender mercy, remove it from you.

And now answer me one question uprightly, as in God's sight, from whom it is in my heart to propound it to you.

Are you come to Zion, or are ye travelling thitherward rightly and truly? Have ye ever known any of the travellers that ye have been acquainted with, that could in truth say, that they were come to Zion? The Christians, in the primitive times, were come to Zion, and they were ac-

quainted and dwelt with God and Christ there; and knew Jerusalem, the heavenly building, the city of the living God. Oh! where are ye? Nay, are ye yet come out of Babylon? Do ye yet know the wilderness, the intricate passages therein, wherethrough God alone can lead the soul? Oh! depart ye, depart ye from your present stations (in the leadings of God's Spirit), unless ye can say, in the true, unerring light, that they are your rest, your soul's true rest, even the everlasting kingdom, which the primitive Christians received, and into which they found entrance, which could not be shaken.

And, friends, let me tell you one thing further (for my heart is at this present opened to you by the Lord), that as the soul, in its travels, comes to Zion, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is witnessed, which makes free from the law of sin and death. And then there is no more such a crying out of the body of sin as there was before: but a blessing of him who hath delivered, and daily doth deliver, from it: yea, the body of sin is known and felt to be put off, and Christ put on in the stead thereof. For, my friends, there are several states witnessed by the soul, in its true and sensible travels towards the holy land. As for instance:

1. There is a state of Egyptian darkness and bondage, in which the power of death reigns and rules in the heart, subjecting it to sin and death. And here the soul is in the grave, and under death, captivity, and bondage, in the midst of all its professions of religion, and talk of God and Christ, and reading scriptures, and observing ordinances and duties, &c.

2. There is a wilderness state, wherein the strength of captivity is somewhat broken, and the heart drawn to mind the leadings of life, and to follow after the Lord through the trials, through the preparations, through the several exercises, which the Lord seeth good to exercise it with.

And here the mercy and goodness of the Lord is experienced, and the deceitfulness and treachery of the heart. This is the place of humiliation and breaking, wherein the soul daily feels how untoward and unaccustomed it is to the

yoke, which should break the spirit, and subdue it to God. Here the Lord shows the soul what its heart is, that he might humble it, and do it good in the latter end. Here the very law of God appears weak, through the strength of the flesh, which is not yet subdued. Now, here is mourning, and groaning, and crying to the Lord night and day, both because of the violence and multitude of the enemies, and because of the naughtiness, distrust, and unbelief of the heart.

3. There is a state of rest, a state of peace, a state of life, a state of power, a state of grace, a state of dominion, in the life, and through the power of the Lord, wherein the law of life is manifested in dominion in the heart over the law of sin and death. There is an everlasting kingdom, wherein God and Christ reign, in which God treads Satan down under the feet of the soul, and makes the soul a king and a priest in the Son of his love; and the soul feels it is one with, and accepted in, the beloved.

Now, friends, that ye may know this kingdom, travel faithfully towards it; feel and come into the reign of Christ in it; sit down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and inherit substance; know the gathering to Christ in the name, and sit down in the name, where the enemy cannot touch you; but feel the preservation and powerful life and dominion of that seed which is over the enemy, and wherein and whereby the Lord scatters the enemy, bruising the serpent's head, and anointing the soul with the oil of gladness, and clothing it with the beautiful garments of his righteousness and salvation; and that ye may know the precious and glorious building of life in the Spirit, even of the holy house and city of God, where the walls are salvation, and the gates praise. For this end it is in my heart from the Lord to write these things unto you; and the Lord God of his mercy open the door of entrance to you into these things; for there is but one door of life, and there is not another; which door is Christ, the seed; which seed is revealed within, there to break the wisdom, strength, and head of the serpent; and so far as he breaks it there,

redemption and freedom is witnessed from it, and no further.

Oh that ye might receive an understanding from the Lord, and be taught by him to deny and part with the understanding which is not of him, that ye might see things (from him, and in his light) which ye have not yet seen; and consider aright of that, which the enemy hitherto, by his subtlety, hath prejudiced you against.

And now as for us, who experience the truth as it is in Jesus, and with the Lord our God in his light, and by virtue of his life and love shed abroad in our hearts,—I say, what is it to us to be judged by you in your day as persons that deny Christ, deny scriptures, deny ordinances, deny duties, &c.? We are satisfied in our hearts as touching your judgment, knowing from the Lord what it is in you that thus judgeth of us, even the same thing that judged amiss of Christ (in the Scribes, Pharisees, and professing Jews) in the days of his flesh. And indeed, that in you can never judge aright; but is to be judged, condemned, and destroyed by the life and power of the Lord.

And oh that ye knew (sensibly knew) what is to live, and what is to die in you, that ye might feel the rising of your souls out of the grave, through the immortal seed of God, and the bringing of all your wisdom and knowledge of the things of God (which ye hold, and make use of, out of the compass and limits of his holy life and covenant) into death!

For, friends, let me tell you, that which hath been parted with (for the kingdom's sake, and the righteousness thereof) in some, was more precious than what ye hold so stiffly, and so magnify in your own thoughts and reasonings against the truth. Yea, that which was once of high esteem, and very glorious in our eyes, is now become as dross and dung, for the excellency of the pure, living knowledge of, and fellowship with, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and if ye had the true measure and balance to weigh things in, ye would acknowledge it: but the letter, and little ordinances and duties, and apprehensions of things out of the life, kills you, and keeps you under the veil, and from the sight of the things which are within the veil.

Oh that God would rend the veil in you! Oh that God would give you the feeling of, and union with, that whereby he rends the veil! Oh that he would humble you, and bring down the mighty from his seat of judgment in you, to be judged and abased, and exalt the meek and lowly into that which is his proper place!

Oh that ye might feel the work of God, even the redemption of the soul, begun and carried on by him with power in your hearts! Then would ye know Christ indeed, the scriptures indeed, the ordinances indeed, the duties indeed, the everlasting sabbath, the everlasting worship; even the substance of all that was shadowed out under the law, and sit down under the wing of the Almighty, from whence the power, the life, the virtue, the healing, drops into the soul.

And now, to give a touch at those things before mentioned, which ye so stumble at, a little to help to remove them from your spirits, if it please the Lord.

1. We do not deny that Christ which died at Jerusalem; but own him, and no other: and own what he did, his obedience to the Father always, and in all things; his sufferings in the virtue and power of the Father, and the value of them with the Father. This the Lord our God teacheth us to own, and to bless the name of the Lord, for him who is the Captain, and worker out of our salvation; a measure of whose life and power we have received, and embrace in our hearts; and in this is He, the fulness, made manifest to us; and we, through this, and by this, and in this, ingrafted into him; and so come to partake of the sweetness and fatness of the olive-tree. Yea, this we certainly know, that Christ was not only made manifest in that body of flesh, but is also made manifest in our mortal flesh, as we are gathered into his life, and his life brought forth in us. And he is not only antichrist, that denieth Christ's appearance in that body of flesh; but he that denieth him (the hope of glory) in his saints, his spiritual body. Yea, I beseech you consider, whether it hath been the work of antichrist all along the apostasy to deny the appearance of Christ in that body of flesh, or to deny the appearance of his life and

Spirit in the flesh of his saints? "We know (saith the apostle John) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true." How was he come? Was not he that was with them come in them? Did he not live in them, act in them, speak in them? And did not they that were of God hear the voice of Christ, the voice of the Shepherd, in them? But they which were not of God, which were not the sheep, could not hear the voice of Christ in his apostles and believers; could not own him come in their flesh, though they could preach the same Christ in words, and own his coming in that body of flesh which he had appeared in. 1 John iv. 6.

2. We do indeed really, heartily, singly, as in God's sight, own the scriptures; the scriptures written by the prophets and holy men of God under the law; the scriptures written by the evangelists and apostles in the time of the gospel; and we read them with delight and joy, and would draw no man from a right reading of them to the benefit of his soul; but only from giving their own judgments on them without the Spirit of God; lest in so doing, they wrest them to their own destuction.

This is that which the Lord hath drawn us from, and which we know it would also be profitable to others to be drawn from too; to wit, from imagining and guessing at the meaning of scriptures, and interpreting them without the opening of that Spirit from which they were given forth; for they who so do, feed that part (with a gathered knowledge) which should be famished, die, and perish; that another thing might come to live in them, and they in it.

Now to us, being taught of God, and led by him into the things and through the conditions the scriptures speak of, the scriptures are very precious, the relation of things under the law precious, the instructions, promises, and comforts precious, yea, the very reproofs and denunciations of judgment to that part, nature and spirit which the judgments are to, precious; and it is impossible for any heart to conceive (who hath not the experience of the thing) how life springs in us; and how sweet, pleasant, and profitable

the words of life in the writings of the holy men of God are to our spirits; and in reading them we often meet with refreshment, comfort, hope, and joy, from the working of the same Spirit in us, which gave forth the good words through them.

3. As touching ordinances, we own all the ordinances and appointments of God to the Jews under the law, and God's presence with them, walking with the Lord, and worshipping him in the faith according thereto. Yea, what if I should say, that we know and are exercised in the same worship in Spirit towards the Lord our God, who hath called and taught us to worship him in spirit and truth, so as he taught them, according to the shadow and letter? What if I should say, that we worship the Lord in spirit on the Lord's day (which is inward and spiritual, the true rest, the substantial sabbath), and that we offer up to him the living sacrifices, which the High Priest of our profession prepares in us for the most excellent majesty and glory of our God therein? Were not the sacrifices under the law, which they offered up according to the letter, types and shadows of what the Lord teacheth us, and giveth us to offer up to him in spirit, when we appear before him in his house built on his holy mountain? For, friends, the house wherein we appear is spiritual (an house of God's own building); the worship spiritual, the sacrifices spiritual, the day of worship spiritual, even the day which the Lord hath made. And here we know and enjoy the things shadowed out under the law spiritually, eating that which is meat indeed, and drinking that which is drink indeed, even the flesh and blood of the Son of man; in which we feel and partake of his nature, his virtue, his life, his substance, and both take it into us, and put it upon us; so that we have Christ both to be our food and clothing; and in the birth, nature, and Spirit which is of him, cannot be deceived concerning him.

But the great matter ye seem to have against us as to ordinances, is about the baptism of water, and breaking outward bread, and drinking outward wine; concerning which

I have two or three weighty queries to propound to be seriously considered of.

Query 1. Were these things themselves the things of the kingdom, or significations of somewhat relating to the kingdom, as the shadows under the law were? And so, though they might have a use and service in the passage from the law, yet could they have an absolute place in the day? For as the day dawns and breaks, the shadows fly away. What should the shadow do, when that which the shadow signified is come? What place is there for shadows in the substance, in the everlasting kingdom?

Now though the apostle condescended so as to circumcise for the sake of the Jews, yet circumcision was not to abide. So he condescended also as to John's baptism; to wit, the baptism of water (for that was not Christ's baptism, but his baptism was that of the Holy Ghost and fire); yet he blessed God he did not make use of it, and said, *he was not sent to baptize.* What was he not sent to baptize with? Why, not with water, not with John's baptism; but he was sent to baptize with Christ's baptism; to baptize into the name, into the Spirit, into the power (and so were all the apostles), as well as to preach the gospel. Gal. iii. 5. Mat. xxviii. 19.

Then for the outward supper: was not that a shadow of the true, substantial supper of the Lord, of the breaking of the true bread, and drinking of the true wine (the fruit of the vine of life) in the kingdom of God? Which kingdom was at hand in John's time, and the disciples of Christ were to pray it might come; and the apostles, and they afterwards (that were in the power, in the life, in the righteousness, in the joy eternal) did witness it come. For mark: the promise was not only of a kingdom of glory hereafter, when the body is laid down; but they were to receive the kingdom, and feel an entrance (yea, an abundant entrance) into the everlasting kingdom ministered to them even then: and they were to eat bread in the kingdom, and drink wine in the kingdom, even new bread, and new wine, fresh from the table of the Lord, yea, and with the Lord, in his pres-

ence, according to the promise, *he would come and dwell in them, and walk in them, and sup with them, and they with him.* And thus they in their day, and we in our day (blessed be the name of the Lord our God!) eat and drink of the heavenly bread and wine of the kingdom with Christ therein; every one sitting in the heavenly place, and mansion of rest, which the Lord hath built up and prepared for him.

Query 2. Have not these outward things been much abused, and the antichristian spirit (even the whorish spirit, which hath adulterated from the life and power of God) appeared in them, and cried them up? And surely, as so cried up by that spirit, they are neither of nor for Christ.

And consider well what that outward court was which God gave to the Gentiles, and what the worship and ordinances of the outward court were; and whether they were not given to the Gentiles also, and whether these are any part of them; for if so, then they belong not to, nor are required by, the Lord, of the inward Jews, who are of the circumcision in the heart, and are come to inherit the substance.

Query 3. Whether there be any virtue in these things in themselves, without God's requiring of them? Can outward water wash the soul? Can outward bread and wine feed or refresh it? Indeed if God require a man to wash his body with water, he ought to be subject, and there will be profit to him in his subjection; but of itself it is but a bodily exercise, and without God's requiring it, it would be but will-worship, and profit him nothing at all.

Now truly the Lord did never require this of us; but hath shown us the water which our souls and bodies had need of to be washed with, and the bread and wine which they are to be fed and refreshed with: and in following the Lord according as he hath led us, and required of us, we have found reconciliation, life, rest, peace, and joy with our Father, and pure refreshment from him.

Query 4. As touching duties: These are the two great duties we are taught, *To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and spirit; and our neighbor as ourselves.* And

these we learn by believing in him whom God sent, and receiving the seed of life from him; in the growth whereof in us we live, and are made one with him, and partakers of the ability which is of him. For not by working of ourselves do we attain to this; but by the working of his powerful life in us, through his mercy to us. He circumciseth us, he cuts off the enmity, he brings under the old nature and spirit in us, and then the new springs up, and we are renewed in it. And in this we learn and are made able to love the Lord, and his children, and his creatures, yea, all that is of him. And this love constrains us to obey the Lord, and deny all for him; so that we can suffer any thing (through his strength) but sin, but corruption, but unbelief, but disobedience to him. Yea, this makes us so tender towards him, that we can rather part with all of this world, than the integrity and subjection of our spirits to him in the least thing that he requires of us; his truth (and our testimony thereto) in every respect being far dearer to us than our lives, and all the enjoyments and pleasures of this present world.

From these two great duties flow many others as towards God; to fear him with the fear which is not taught by the precepts of men, but which he writes in our hearts; to wait upon him night and day in his temple, even in the holy place of his building; to call upon him in the motion, guidance, will, and help of his Spirit (for indeed when once we learn of God, we are taught to pray no more after the flesh, no more after the will, wisdom, or way of man); as also to be sensible of his goodness, and give thanks to him in every condition.

And in this we feel his presence and acceptance, as the Lord is not forgotten by us; but when we eat and drink, walk abroad, or stay at home, we feel him near, and our hearts acknowledge him, bow to him, wait upon him, bless him, praise his name, and speak words concerning him, or to him, with the outward voice, when he gives them, and requires them of us; but of a truth we dare bring no sacrifices of our own, nor kindle any fire or sparks of our own;

but wait for the holy breath, Spirit, and power of our God, to perform all in us, and by us.

But now, because we do not pray at certain set times (as we formerly were wont to do), nor speak words before and after meat as formerly, and the like, ye are offended with us, and say we deny this duty. No, no; we do not deny to God the prayer which is from the birth immortal; but this we say, and sensibly feel, prayer is a gift, and the ability thereof is in God's Spirit; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, nor have we a power in us to pray when or as we will; but in the Holy Spirit, in his breathing in us, is our ability; and we are to wait on him for the moving and breathing of his Spirit, and not to pray of ourselves, or in our own wills or times, but in the Father's. And it is a mighty thing to speak to God aright in prayer. Flesh must be silent before him, and laid still and low in his presence, that the pure spring may open, the pure breath breathe, and the pure voice issue forth; for God heareth not sinners, but the born of him that doth his will. This must every soul witness in his measure, as Christ witnessed it in the fulness; and there is no serving God aright, or performing any duty or ordinance of worship to him aright, but in a measure of the same life and Spirit wherewith Christ served him.

Now, I do not only own the state of the Jews in their integrity, and of the primitive Christians in theirs, and of what the Lord hath caused to break forth in this our day, but I also own all the appearances of God all along the night of the apostasy in the holy martyrs and witnesses, which he raised up, and enabled to bear testimony to his truth, and against the antichristian practices of many in that dark night of the apostasy. And thus also I own all the work of God in my own heart, and in the hearts of others (whom he pleased to work upon) in former times; yea, the breathings and desires which are yet in the hearts of any after the Lord, so far as they are in the truth, and of and from the Lord, I cannot but own. But the Lord hath shown me that there is a great mixture in men's desires and endeavors after him; and that the evil spirit, by his sub-

tlety, doth often get the managing of them, and turn the very zeal and earnestness of the mind (through prejudices and misapprehensions) against the Lord and his truth. Now, this is a very dangerous state, and there are some (who little think so) in this state, doing that against the Lord, and against his Christ, his truth, his people, which, if ever their eyes be opened, they will mourn bitterly over; and if their eyes be not opened, but they walk on by a wrong light (even by a light of their own gathering, imagining, and conceiving), whither will it lead them, and what will their end be? Oh that ye could hear! Oh that ye could fear aright! Oh that ye could rightly consider! Oh that ye could feel the life and power of the Lord near you, the Word of life near you, even as near as ye have felt the enemy and his temptations, that ye might partake of, and witness with joy, the virtue and redemption of it! Oh that ye could once aright look upon him whom ye have pierced, and yet daily pierce, and cannot but pierce, until the righteous judgments of the Lord be poured out on the head of the transgressor in you, and the Lord waited upon, feared, and subjected to, in the way of his judgments, that ye may feel the refining work finished, the dross burned up, the temple prepared, the vessel brought out of the furnace! What then? Why, when the Lord hath built up Zion, prepared his temple, cleansed his house, will he not appear there in his glory? Shall it not become a house of prayer? of pure prayer, and of pure praises? Shall there be any lame or blind sacrifices offered up there? Shall it not be the beauty of holiness indeed? Shall not the appearance of the Lord be more glorious than ever it was in the temple and ordinances under the law? Shall not every living stone in this building feel the God of life and power present of a truth, and feel not only the earth, but the very heavens melt before him and pass away, and nothing remain but the pure light and life of the Lamb?

Words and promises spoken concerning things to be brought forth in the gospel state do not go beyond the things spoken; but the things brought forth excel and go

beyond the words, being so felt and enjoyed by that which is fitted and prepared by the Lord, as words cannot utter. The Lord God lead all that rightly desire after him into the right way (and preserve them therein) of meeting with and enjoying what their hearts rightly desire, and beat back the enemy in all his devices of entangling, perplexing, and drawing them aside; that they may receive the covenant, the new covenant, walk with God in the light thereof, live in the life thereof, obey through the power thereof; and may know what kind of meat and drink, what joy, delight, and pleasure it is to the soul to do the will, in the principle, and by the power, of the new life. So the Lord God Almighty, the Creator, Guider, and Preserver of his Israel, lead you out of the darkness, bring you through the wilderness, reveal the hope in you, and stay your minds thereon, and give you to feel the true travel and faithful walking with him in the footsteps of the flock, which he hath led and is leading his in, and unto some of whom (in the tender mercy which from on high hath visited them) he hath given full rest and satisfaction in his truth.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE GROUND OF CERTAINTY AND SATISFACTION, WHICH IT HATH PLEASED THE LORD TO ESTABLISH IN MY HEART, CONCERNING RELIGION, AND THE THINGS OF HIS KINGDOM.

I HAVE been afflicted from my childhood, mourning and seeking after the Lord, and feeling very much grief and pain of spirit, through my sense of the want of him. I have not been contented with the way of religion I was educated in, but (through that of God which stirred in me) found great defects in it, and was drawn and led by his Spirit to travel through it, and seek further. That which I still sought after was the resting-place, the life of my soul, and power and presence of the Lord, that demonstration of his Spirit (as touching truth and the way of God) which was witnessed in the days of the apostles. Now, breathing af-

ter this, but not meeting with it, caused unutterable anguish, misery, and distress in my heart, so that my condition could not be hid within mine own breast, but my sorrow also brake forth in the sight of others.

But at length the eternal bowels have pitied me, and have showed me the place of the soul's rest, and I have felt the eternal arm gathering me into, and giving me some possession of, a measure thereof; so that my heart is satisfied about religion and the things of God's kingdom, being taught of God how to know the Pearl, and the way also how to come to inherit and enjoy it; and in that way I have had great experience of the love, mercy, wisdom, goodness, power, and righteousness of the Lord; and notwithstanding all my soul's enemies, I still feel his presence, life, and power, to his praise, which doth the work in me, and which giveth me to hope in him, and wait upon him. And now in love and tenderness of bowels to others, it is in my heart to answer a question or two about the ground of the assurance and satisfaction which God hath given my soul; it being in my heart not to grieve or trouble any, but only to be helpful in holding forth what the Lord hath demonstrated to and written in my heart, as he shall draw, move, and enable my spirit thereunto; to whom my soul boweth, and giveth the praise of all that he hath done in me, and pleaseth by his Spirit and power to work through me.

Quest. 1. It may be inquired by some, how I come to know the Spirit of God, and his church, and the scriptures of the holy men to be written by the inspiration and leading of his Holy Spirit; and how I know the motions and drawings of his Spirit in me, from the motions, suggestions, and temptations of the evil spirit; and how I am satisfied that I am in the way of truth and life eternal, and do not wander out of it, and err from it.

Ans. Thus I know: By receiving, joining to, abiding and growing up in, that holy seed, which the Father of spirits hath sown in me. There is an elect seed which cannot possibly be deceived, which seed the Father soweth, and causeth to grow in the hearts of them that receive it; whose

earth is by him digged and prepared for it. Now, I have felt this seed from God, this holy, pure thing, which there is nothing like for virtue and excellency. Nothing hath its nature besides it, nothing manifests the Father but it; the heart is changed, renewed, restored into the holy image by this alone.

In this seed there is no deceit; no deceit ever came from it, no deceit ever entered into it, nor can; and from the day that I have known it, I have always felt preservation by it, while my heart hath been kept to it. Mine eye never missaw in it, mine ear never misheard in it, my heart never misunderstood in it; but here I have felt given to me, and maintained in me by God, the eye which sees, the ear which hears, the heart which understands the things of his kingdom; and here the entrance hath been ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where God reveals by his Spirit the mysteries of his kingdom, which all else are shut out of, but this seed and the birth which is of it. And when the enemy hath at any time in my travels, by any temptation or device, got in any degree between my soul and this seed; then a darkness, a loss, doubts, fears, troubles, &c. have so far come over my soul.

Quest. 2. But how know I this seed? may some inquire.

Ans. By its nature, by its properties, by its manifesting of itself in my heart. It hath that light, that life, that power in it, which I never met with anywhere else. It bruiseth the head of the serpent at its pleasure, whereby I know it to be the seed of the woman. It dasheth in pieces (through subjection to it) whatever is contrary to God, and bringeth up his holy nature in me. It so bringeth me into the very image of his Son, that what I read in the Scriptures concerning the nature, righteousness, and work of salvation by Christ, I find formed and springing up in mine own heart, as I am gathered into, and brought forth in, this seed. Yea, I really feel that I am born of God's Spirit, so far as I am born of this. Here I feel, know, understand, and am acquainted with, the substance, the thing itself, that which all the types and figures of the law shadowed out. Here I

meet with the circumcision which is without outward hands; the baptism which is without outward water; the supper of the Lord which is without outward bread or wine; and here I know the true Jew, whose nature, spirit, works, and ways are all of God, in and through his Son, Jesus Christ. and here I must profess, I cannot doubt concerning the things of God: but in the light and anointing of this seed, see both the mystery of iniquity, and the mystery of godliness, and the ways and workings of each spirit, both inwardly and outwardly; and my unity with the one (through the tender mercy, goodness, love, and power of the Lord, all which are herein revealed), and my separation from the other.

And this is the true way of certainty and satisfaction, which is of God, and will stand, when all the several ways of men's inventions will fail of what they promise to men, and fall in the sight of men. For this seed and birth of God are to be acknowledged, and reign in the day of his power, and not another. And it is the day of his power in some, and shall be the day of his power in others; for darkness or death shall not prevail to bring the life of the risen Son into the sepulchre or grave again; but he shall ride on conquering and to conquer, subduing and to subdue, reigning and to reign, until he hath brought all things under the dominion of the Father's power.

A Question answered about the way of knowing the motions, doctrines, and teachings of Christ's Spirit.

Quest. How may a man know the motions, doctrines, and teachings of Christ's Spirit inwardly, from the deceivable movings, appearings, and workings of a contrary spirit? And how may a man know concerning the doctrines that others teach, whether they speak from Christ, or whether they speak of themselves?

Ans. This is a great matter indeed, and he must first re-

ceive somewhat from God, who is able to do this. He must be born of the wisdom that is from above, he must receive a spirit of discerning from God, he must receive somewhat of the sheep's ear, somewhat of the holy understanding, whereby he may be able to distinguish spirituals, and put a difference between the pure and impure; between the pretender to the things of God, and him which is indeed of God. There is a balance of the sanctuary appointed to weigh spiritual things and appearances in; and by this balance alone are they truly and rightly discerned and distinguished; and this balance is in the sanctuary, in the holy, heavenly place in Christ Jesus, where the true weight of spiritual things (or things that pretend to be truly spiritual and living, but are not) is given and discerned. But he that weighs without this, he that weighs by his own judgment and understanding, by his own comprehension and conceivings; he weighs by that which is uncertain, changeable, and fallible, and turns up and down according to the appearance of things to him, but judgeth not the righteous judgment, which is from the sense, and in the light of, truth.

Therefore, oh! that men were humble, tender, meek, and sensible of their inability to judge as of themselves, that they might see the need of this gift of God, and wait upon him for it; being in the mean time as the weaned child, not meddling with things too high for them, but keeping and abiding low, in fear and subjection to that which the Lord hath already made manifest to them. For what man is there, to whom the Lord hath not already, in his tender mercy and goodness, made somewhat of himself manifest? Who is there, who, by the light of the Spirit of God in his conscience, knoweth not some evil which he ought to leave undone, and some good which he ought to do? Now this is the way of God, and the work which man should be exercised in, to feel his mind gathered into that which teacheth this, that he might receive power from the Lord to cease to do the evil which he is thus warned by him of, and to do the good which is thus required of him. For thus the Spirit of the Lord teacheth and requireth of men, even

inwardly in their secret parts, secretly quickening and enlivening them in some measure, and giving them a sense of their sin, death, separation from him, misery and danger thereby; for where there is any sight of sin, and any sense of the burden thereof, there is some life, some light, some little stirrings of the life, and some quickenings thereby, without which this sense could not be. Now mark:

Are not here the drawings of the Father? Are not here the teachings of the Father, though but in a little measure; yet true, yet living? Is not here some little discerning given between the precious and the vile; between somewhat that is of God, and somewhat that is against him? Well then, here is the gift of discerning, though in a poor, low, little, weak measure; and that man who receiveth this, receiveth the beginnings of the gift, somewhat of the gift, whereby he may be able to discern and distinguish a little about spiritual things, so far as the light and ability of the gift in him extendeth.

Now, this is man's work (and in this lies his safety), to come hither, abide here, and grow here. Not to judge out of this; to judge no further concerning the things of God, than this judgeth in him; to keep the judgment he hath from this; not hearkening to the subtle devices of the enemy, which will strive afterward to cloud his mind, delude and deceive him, with a false appearance of wise reasonings and disputings of his own, or from other men, to make him believe otherwise. And so keeping what ground he hath gained, he is to wait for more of this light, more of this life, more of this virtue, that his soul may grow up and increase therein, that his eye may be strengthened to see further, and his ear to hear further, and his heart to embrace more of the instructions and directions of the Spirit of the Lord, unto and in the way of the kingdom.

Therefore the man that would meet with, and receive from God, the gift of discerning, let him mind the present manifestation of God's light from his Spirit in his heart; embrace that, fall in with that, take heed of the reasonings of the mind against the convictions and demonstrations of

God's Spirit, but receive the truth in the love of it, even the lowest appearance of truth, about the least and most despisable things, and give up faithfully to the Lord therein, without murmuring, without disputing, without consulting with flesh and blood. And he that is faithful to the light of the Spirit (and to the discerning that is thereby) in the little, he shall receive more, he shall have his light and discerning thereby increased, as his need requireth. But he that stands disputing, and would have all his way made clear to him, before he sets one step in it; he is far from becoming that child, which the Father teacheth, and administereth an entrance into the kingdom to.

This, in effect, was the very answer which Christ gave to this thing in the days of his flesh, when there were great disputes concerning his doctrine, how to know whether it was of God, or no. What was the resolution he gave of this; "If any man," saith he, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John vii. 17. Wouldst thou know of the Son's doctrine? Wouldst thou know whether it be the doctrine of the Son indeed, the doctrine of him who comes from the Father? Yes, very fain, will the upright heart say; oh that I might know concerning what rises and opens in my heart, whether it be from the Spirit of God, or from the root of deceit in me! Why, this is the way; do the Father's will.

Obj. Do the Father's will; why what an answer is this! The dispute is about the Father's will. Is not the doctrine of the Son the Father's will? How can I do the Father's will, which the Son is to teach me, until I first know of the Son's doctrine?

Ans. It is true, the Son's doctrine is the Father's will, and thou canst not do the Father's will, but as thou receivest the Son's doctrine. But mark: There are disputes in thy mind about somewhat of the Son's doctrine, whether it be his doctrine, or no; somewhat also about inward motions, workings, and stirrings in thee, which thou wouldst fain know whence they are. Now, the question is concerning the way how thou mayest attain to this; how thou mayest

come to a certain and satisfactory knowledge herein? Which is, not by entering into reasonings and disputes about these things whereof thou doubtest, but by coming into that wherein and whereby they are made manifest; and that is by coming into obedience to the Father in that which he hath already made manifest; for in that light (to them that believe in it), and in obedience thereto (be it ever so little, or the manifestation ever so small), the Father will reveal more, and give to that heart and mind to be sensible of what is of him, and what is of the enemy, so far as it is needful for it as yet to know. For wise and absolute judgment in all things is not necessary for a babe; but sense to know the breast, and to receive from it the milk, by which it is to be fed that it may grow. This is enough in its present state; yet if there be need of strength at any time to still the enemy and the avenger, the Lord will reveal it in the heart, and bring it forth out of the mouths of the babes and sucklings, to the perfecting of his praise.

So mind and learn the way, O ye that are simple-hearted (and truly desire after the Lord, and the purity and power of his kingdom)! and take heed of the wrong way; take heed of man's way, which is by consulting with his own wisdom, and weighing things in the balance of his own reason and understanding; and thus he may weigh scriptures written in former ages, and the appearances of God in this age, and err in heart, mind, and judgment concerning them both, all his days. But he that waits on the Lord in fear, and in obedience to that which is already made manifest, not desiring knowledge from God in his own will, time, or way, but in the Lord's, who perfectly knows every one's state, and what is fit for him,—he shall know concerning every doctrine his heart desireth to be instructed in, in the Lord's season; and in the mean time the Lord will feed him with food convenient, and clothe him with clothing convenient; and there shall be no want to him, who boweth before the Lord in what is already made manifest, and waiteth for his further manifestations and appearances. But the wise hunter after knowledge, before the Lord leads, and

further than he leads and teaches,—this is the first birth, which is excluded the kingdom and the mysteries thereof: this is he who always despised and would still kill the heir, that the inheritance might be his; but the inheritance is appointed for and given to another; even to the Lamb's nature, the Lamb's Spirit, the Lamb's innocency, the birth of another wisdom, which is a foolish, weak birth in his eye, and not worthy at all to inherit; but it is the Father's pleasure to give the kingdom and inheritance of life everlasting to these.

To speak yet a little more plainly, and bring it yet a little closer to the heart, if it may be. It hath pleased the Father, in this day of his love and power, to gather a little flock out of the world (and all worldly professions of worship and religion) to himself. This flock he hath gathered by a poor, little, low thing in their hearts, exercising them thereby in poor, mean, and contemptible ways to the eye of the world, and to all the professions of man's wisdom; and by this, and concerning this, he testifieth, through those whom he he hath gathered, to others. And the testimony doth evidence itself, through the power of the Spirit, to all that wait upon God for an ear, and hear in the simplicity thereof.

Now, when we tell men of a divine principle, of a seed of God, wherein their religion is to begin, and from which it is to grow, and whereof they are to be born; this will enter into many, yea, many will assent to be drawn so far as to wait inwardly for and upon this. But now when this begins to stir and move in them, it is in such a way, and many times about such low, mean, contemptible things in their eyes, that they are very apt to despise it, and enter into disputes against it, and so miss of the entrance, and can never thus enter into it; but instead thereof are filled with doubts about the leader and his motions, and puzzled and entangled in their minds, and stopped at the very beginning. And so, though they desire much, and hope much, yet all comes to little, because the enemy hath possessed their minds with a device of his subtlety, as if these were small things, and of little concernment. That which they want is the power.

ful life, the clear light, &c., and so their minds are taken up with thoughts about these great things, and desires after these great things, and they overlook the way wherein and whereby these are to be witnessed and obtained.

For the Lord God, in his infinite wisdom, picked out these contemptible things to exercise his flock by, and to lead them in. And whatever men may think of them, yet none knows, but they who experience it, how hard it is to follow and subject to the Lord in these, and how much they bow down and break the earthly and uncircumcised spirit in a man. Now, friend, thou who desirest life from God, oh! take heed thou dost not beat back the beginnings of his life, and the redemption of thy soul, by despising and overlooking the day of small things. Why may not God choose to lead thee in the way that he hath led the rest of his flock? Why shouldst not thou also come to deny the customs and vanities of this world (and come into that which is simple and plain), and stand in the will and life of God out of them? Are not the ways, customs, and vanities of the world, of the spirit of the world, and not of the Father? Did they not come from the corrupt part? Are they not of the corrupt part? Do they not please the corrupt part? Must they not be left behind by him that travels into the seed, is one with the seed, and lives in the seed? Why wilt thou stick in these things? Why wilt thou dispute about these things? Oh! feel the Father's drawings, first out of the world, first out of that which is not of the Father, but of the world; that he may draw thee further and further, even into the kingdom and power everlasting, which are many days' journey beyond that which thou stickest at.

Now mind and remember this which followeth: In the days of Christ and his apostles, God chose the foolish things, and the weak things, and things that were not, to hide the path of life, and the mysteries of his kingdom, from the wise, searching eye of man in those days. Why may he not choose the like things now? Why may he not now reveal things to the babes, and not to the wise of this age and generation? Why may it not be to his glory, to

have it now said also: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe (where is the learned man)? Where is the disputer of this world?" Can any of them find out that, or any of them discern that, which God revealeth to his little ones? No, no; they are generally got too high above that little, low, tender, meek, sensible principle, in the faith whereof, and in obedience whereto, the teachings of God are received, and his life and power witnessed. And because of their riches, wisdom, and knowledge out of this, therefore is the entrance into the pure, living truth (which cleanseth the mind, and keepeth it clean, which quickeneth it, and keepeth it living) to them so exceeding difficult.

And as the principle is little, the seed of the kingdom little (like a grain of mustard seed), the least of all seeds; so, why may not its appearance also be little, even in low, weak things, despisable to man's eye and wisdom; which man sees nothing in, and may account of no value? And yet, the power of the cross (which brings down and slays the corruptible), and the resurrection of the life may be witnessed and felt in them. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men:" and he knoweth what he doth in leading his children in this contemptible path, and by these contemptible exercises, which all that is wise, high, lofty, and aspiring, according to the flesh, may easily overlook and slight, but can hardly stoop down and subject to.

God is the same that ever he was; and he still appears in the way of his own wisdom, and out of man's; and he that will partake of God's wisdom must deny and keep out of his own. His touches, his drawings, his teachings, his blessings, his love, his peace, his joy, his sweetness, &c. are let forth upon, felt, and enjoyed by the soul, in the new creation, in the new sense, in the denial and passing out of the old.

Somewhat Touching the Gospel-Rest, or Sabbath.

What is the gospel-rest? What is the gospel-sabbath? Is it a shadow, as that of the law was? Or is it the substance of that which the law shadowed out?

"The law was given by Moses." Moses, by the command of God, gave forth the shadows of the heavenly things under the law; "But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The true sabbath, the true rest, the law of the Spirit of life, in and to the true Jews, comes by him. The law of Moses had the shadow of the good things to come; which good things themselves the gospel contains, bringing life and immortality to light, and the soul into the enjoyment and possession of the heavenly things themselves.

The apostle disputes the case about both these, Heb. iv. both about the seventh day of rest, and about the land of rest; showing that they were neither of them the substance; they were but the rests which were to pass away. But besides them, there was a rest remaining, a day of rest remaining, a land of rest remaining; whereof they both (both the outward sabbath of rest, and the land of rest under the law) were figures.

Now for whom did this rest remain? Why, it remained for the true Jews, for believers, for the spiritual circumcision in the times of the gospel. "And we (saith he) who have believed, do enter into rest." The faith gives entrance, the Son's faith; the faith which stands in the power, the faith which is victory, and gives victory over sin and the world, removes the mountains and difficulties which stand in the way, and gives entrance into the gospel-rest. Faith, which is from and of the power of the endless life, puts sin under, brings down self, gathers man into a new principle, brings man forth in a new principle, causeth him to live and act in a new principle, &c. And as man comes thither, and that life riseth and hath power in him, it causeth him to rest from his own works, and to wait for and experience God, in and through Christ, to work all, and be all in him.

The apostle Peter also speaks of this rest, and declares how it is attained, even by suffering in the flesh, "He that hath suffered (saith he) in the flesh hath ceased from sin." 1 Pet. iv. 1. It is the fleshly part, the motions in the flesh, from whence sin ariseth.

"Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin." Now Christ hath prepared and appointed a cross, a spiritual yoke, to bring down the flesh, which causeth great suffering in the flesh to him that taketh it upon him. To deny all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, motion, desire, and delight of the fleshly mind and nature, there is a sore suffering to the earthly part; but yet this bringeth down the earthly part in all that take it up, and helpeth and causeth to cease from sin. And he that hath taken up the cross wholly, and felt the thorough work of it, and suffered in the flesh the parting with and crucifying all that is of the flesh, that which would cause him to sin is slain in him, and he ceaseth from sin. Then he is in the rest; then he keeps the rest fully; then he knows the yoke and cross, which was once burdensome to him, to become easy and delightful, that being worn out in him to which it was painful.

Now he that is in measure delivered, that hath in measure suffered, findeth some rest, and may in some measure keep the sabbath; yea, in the faith, the weakest babe (abiding there) cannot but keep the sabbath, and offer up the sacrifices, and perform the services thereof to the Lord. For the worship of the New Testament relates not to outward times or days; but is in the Spirit, in the truth, in the name, in the power, in the substance, on the day, and in the times and seasons which the Lord hath made, and makes, in the spirits of his people.

And here that scripture is witnessed to those that are born of the Spirit, and live in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace." Who are not under the law, but under grace? Why, they that are gathered by the grace, that hear the voice of God in the grace, drawing and enabling them to follow; they whom the grace over-

shadows from the power and dominion of sin; they are under it, they are sheltered, saved, and preserved by it.

He that is born of God sinneth not, but obeyeth the grace; but he that committeth sin, is the servant of sin, and not yet made free by the grace and power of the Son, from it. Yea, the Son gives that freedom in his day from sin, and the power of Satan, as they that are out of the light of his day cannot so much as believe; but they that are gathered into, and walk in the light thereof, they witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, making them free from the law of sin and death. What! is the stronger than the strong man come, with his law and power of the endless life, and shall not he manifest his dominion in the heart, over the law of sin and death? Yea, as it is received, and let in, it works out, overcomes, bears down, over-runs the law of sin and death; and that promise is witnessed, fulfilled, *O death! I will be thy death.*

And if God, by the power and breath of his Holy Spirit, with the living, powerful laws thereof, kill sin and death in the heart, what shall make them alive again? No, no; then they are dead indeed, and the kingdom and reign of Christ is witnessed in that soul.

Then the birth of life is witnessed; then the man-child is witnessed, ruling with a rod of iron, dashing in pieces all motions and temptations to corruption, and all that would defile, so that they cannot enter the mind; and guarding it in the pure peace, unspeakable joy, and rest of the Son continually. And there it is as truly witnessed inwardly (as ever it was at any time enjoyed or hoped for by the Jews outwardly) that this horn of salvation, which God hath raised up in the house of his servant David, breaks all the horns of the oppressors, and gives rest to the soul from them round about, that, without fear of them any more, it may serve him in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of its life.

There are some good desires in many people, for which, blessed be the name of the Lord; but there is great error of judgment, and wandering up and down from the truth,

for want of that which is able to stay the mind upon the Lord, and to guide it in the right way. Some run to this mountain, and sacrifice there; others to that hill, and offer there; but few know the true resting place, or the place of the true worship. Now in these their errors, they can witness no acceptance with the Lord. Oh that they knew the acceptable thing, the acceptable way of worship, and might appear before, and be found of, the Lord therein! Then might they begin in that which is substantial, (in the gospel Spirit, life, and power) and come to inherit and sit down in that which is substantial and everlasting.

SOME QUERIES

TO SUCH AS COMPLAIN OF WANT OF POWER TO BECOME THE LORD'S, AND SERVE HIM; AND WHO ARE NOT YET SO ACQUAINTED WITH THE TRUTH AS TO WITNESS THE CLEANSING BY IT, AND CEASING FROM SIN.

Query 1. WAS not Christ made a king and priest after the power of an endless life? And doth he not communicate of the power of that endless life to all that rightly believe in him, receive the truth as it is in him, and obey his gospel?

Query 2. Was it not the end of Christ's coming, to destroy sin in the heart, and to set the soul free therefrom, that it might serve the Lord in the liberty, life, and power of his Spirit?

Query 3. To them that believe in and receive him, doth not Christ give power to become sons to God? And to them that are sons, doth not the Father give the Spirit of the Son? And hath not the Spirit of the Son power over the contrary spirit?

Query 4. Were not the deliverances of the Jews under the law real deliverances from their outward enemies? And are not Christ's deliverances as real from the inward enemies? Whom the Son maketh free, are they not free indeed? Free from sin, free from Satan, being under the shadow of

the wing of the Almighty, which preserveth out of the darkness, and guardeth the mind from the evil and danger thereof?

Query 5. Is not Christ stronger than the strong man, whom he cometh to dispossess? Are not his weapons stronger than the weapons of the enemy? Is not he able to dispossess him, to cast him out, to spoil him of his goods and strength? And when he hath gained the house, is not he able to cleanse it, and garnish, and keep it clean and pure in the way of his covenant, against all the enemy can do?

Query 6. Doth not Christ dwell in the heart by faith? And is not Christ's nature and Spirit pure? and will he dwell in any thing that is impure? Is not the spiritual temple under the gospel to be as pure inwardly, as ever the outward temple under the law was to be pure outwardly, or by way of representation? Must not they be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, who witness the Father dwelling in them, and walking in them?

Query 7. Who offer up the incense and the pure offering in the times of the gospel? Can any do it but the sons of Levi, whom the Lord hath purified? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who can compass the altar of the Lord, or offer up an acceptable offering there, whose hearts and hands are not washed in innocency?

Query 8. Is not the worship of the New Testament to be in spirit and truth? Is not the Spirit pure, the truth pure? Can any thing unclean enter into it? Can any be in it, can any worship in it, but they which be cleansed, purified, and changed by it?

Query 9. How did the apostle express the right manner of drawing nigh to God in the spiritual, gospel worship? Was it not to be thus, with the heart cleansed from an evil conscience, and the body washed with clean water? And is not the presence, power, and acceptance of God witnessed by them that appear before him and worship him thus?

Query 10. Had not other lords dominion over their heart, to subdue it to sin, and defile it, before Christ was known and received in his Spirit and power? But when Christ is

known and received in his Spirit and power, have the other lords power to do so still? Is not Christ's law, the law of his Spirit of life, able to bring under, and make the soul free from the law of sin and death? Insomuch as now it may be said in truth, by the souls whom he hath set free: "O Lord, our God! other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but (now henceforward) by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

Query 11. Was it not a brand of ignominy on those who had got the good words and high notions about Christ, but were not in the authority and power of his Spirit, that they had eyes full of adultery, and could not cease from sin? Can any cease from sin, but he that receiveth the power; And he that receiveth the power of the new life, is it not natural to him to cease from sin, and unnatural to him to commit it?

Query 12. Is not the Lord the teacher of his people under the new covenant? Was it not promised of old concerning the gospel times, and is it not fulfilled in the gospel times, that "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord"? And what doth the Lord teach? Doth he not teach to *cease from doing evil, and to learn to do well?* And shall his children never learn this lesson of him?

Query 13. Whose servants are they that obey unrighteousness? Are they clothed with the strength of God? Do they stand in the power of his might against the power of the enemy? Are they overcomers of the wicked one? Or are they not rather daily overcome by him?

Query 14. What is the whole armor of God provided and appointed for? Is it not to keep out the enemy wholly? and is it able to do it, or no?

Query 15. Will not Christ say to all men upon the earth, profess they what they will, hope in Christ, and cast themselves upon him for salvation ever so much, and ever so often; yea, though they have received such power from him as to preach in his name, and to cast out devils in his name; yet if they have not so received the power as to overcome sin in their own hearts, and to cause them to cease from

working iniquity, though they call him Lord, and cry to him with confidence, "Lord, Lord, open to us," yet will he not say to them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know ye not;" ye are not of the birth of my power; ye are not those which have done my will; ye were never by me redeemed out of the evil doing; but have still all your days (notwithstanding your profession, notwithstanding your knowledge, notwithstanding your owning me as your Lord, and preaching in my name) been workers of iniquity?

Query 16. He that receiveth the spiritual circumcision and baptism of Christ, doth it not cause him to cease from sin? And doth not the new life spring up in him, which causeth him to live holily to God? He that hath the offending eye plucked out, the offending hand cut off, is not that taken away from him which caused him to sin? And he who is created a new creature in Christ, doth he not naturally do that which is holy and righteous? 1 John iii. 7, 8.

Query 17. Doth not the true faith, the faith of the Son of God, give victory over sin? Can any believer be conquered by the enemy, he standing in the faith, abiding in the covenant? Doth not the power stretched out by the Father of life defend the soul in the way of the covenant against all the assaults of the enemies, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against any here, but the name of the Lord is felt a strong tower against them; and though they encompass like bees, yet in the name of the Lord victory is witnessed over them, and against all that they can do? And doth not the Lord teach and enable his to keep covenant?

Query 18. Was not such a thing witnessed by Paul (and may not such a thing be witnessed by the believing and obedient travellers now): "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. I know how to want, I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things I am instructed," &c.? I am armed with the whole armor of God, and taught to stand so upon my guard in the power of his life, that the enemy cannot come at me; but the power of the endless life so preserveth me, as that the evil one can-

not touch me, cannot enter me with any of his temptations in any condition.

Query 19. Was there not such a condition once witnessed, and may it not be witnessed again, of being more than conquerors through the love and power of Christ? When the life doth arise in its power and dominion in the heart, doth it not soon scatter the enemies? Do they not fly away, and are chased at the blast of God's Spirit? When the soul is filled with the love and with the power, is not the land cleansed of what annoyed it? And this, which is sometimes felt by many of the travellers, may it not be an abiding state? Are there not dwelling-places on Mount Zion (on the mount of God's holiness in the gospel time), and is not there security from sin, Satan, the soul's enemies, and dangers? "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord;" and will he not fulfil it to those that wait upon him in the way of his covenant?

THE CONCLUSION.

THERE is a principle of darkness in the hearts and minds of men, which is as a seed or root of corruption in them, bringing forth in them fruits of sin and unrighteousness unto death.

And there is also a principle of the pure, heavenly light, as a free gift from God, to discover the darkness, turn man's heart against it, and lead him into the way and path of life.

Now as Satan rules in the principle of darkness, and there is the power of death therein; so God rules in the principle of light, and there is the power of life and redemption manifested by God therein.

For this principle is of the Father, of the Son, of the Spirit; yea, the Father, Son, and Spirit are in this principle; and here the soul meets with them, and is brought into union and fellowship with them, and feels the everlasting arm revealed and stretched forth for its delivery from cor-

ruption, and the captivity thereof, into the liberty of the sons of God.

And he that is here meets with the substance of things, and that which all the types of the law shadowed out; meets with the one offering, the cleansing which is thereby, the imputation of righteousness, or of faith unto righteousness; yea, and with somewhat more, even with the everlasting righteousness itself brought into the heart, and dwelling there; insomuch as his nature is changed (truly changed) his spirit changed, his mind, heart, soul, and conscience changed, his conversation changed, the leopard's spots and the Ethiopian's skin washed away, the deceitfulness of the heart removed, and the new garments of righteousness, life, and salvation put on in the stead thereof; so that he is unclothed of the evil, unholy nature and spirit, and clothed with the Spirit of the Lord.

For Christ is really made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. How is that? Why he that once was a fool, is now made wise unto God, and the things of his kingdom, by the mystery of his Son's life and power revealed in him. He is a child of wisdom, and he hath heard the wisdom of his mother, and learned wisdom of her. So putting on Christ, who is the righteousness, being ingrafted into him, being brought forth in him, he partakes of the sweetness and fatness of the olive-tree, and is renewed into the image of the true righteousness and holiness, and drinks in the virtue and life of the precious promises, wherein and whereby he is made partaker of the divine nature, and so cannot but witness redemption from the earthly, corrupt nature.

Now, it is not any striving, believing, or obedience of man's own spirit, which can effect this; he may will strongly, he may run hard, and yet never obtain; he may so cast himself upon the mercy of God, and hope concerning his mercy in Christ, as to miss of it.

But the principle of life which is from God, and faith in God from that principle, without fail effects this, and no other faith doth. But out of this are the mysterious im-

ages and idols, and subtle workings and devices of the cunning one, to take up the mind with somewhat which appears as substantial and truly excellent, but is not so indeed. His birth hath desires after the kingdom (and makes no question but it shall be his), wills, runs, strives, believes, hopes, prays, reads scriptures, observes duties and ordinances; and in these they meet with a wrong knowledge, a wrong sactification, a wrong joy, a wrong confidence and assurance, a wrong rest and peace; in which there may be a great warmth, and seeming life and pleasure, from the fire and sparks of their own kindling and blowing up, which the mind that is blinded by him can hardly suspect that it is not true; yea, may be taken with it, and strongly justify it in its own thoughts for the true, and set it above that that is indeed the true. This, this is the great mystery of iniquity, which hath great subtlety of deceivableness in it, to pick up and steal away the good seed out of the heart, and to steal in a false image and likeness thereof, which may have a more glorious appearance to man's eye than the true seed itself (for that is the least of all seeds, makes the least show of any), but hath not the same nature, virtue, and power.

Ah! the Lord God of tender mercy help all the poor souls that breathe after him, that they may not be thus deceived. And those that are thus deceived, and in the snare of the enemy (and do not witness the faith which hath the Son's dominion in it, and gives victory over sin, Satan, and the world, and wherein the blood of sprinkling, which livingly washeth, is felt, in the light of life, wherein the redeemed walk to the praise of their Redeemer); the Lord guide them also to that wherein all deceits are made manifest, and where the truth which is of the Son, is made to shine in such who were once in the barren places, and in the thick darkness, but now are light in the Lord, and who have a dwelling-place with the Lord in his light, which is the pure and everlasting habitation. Amen.

A POSTSCRIPT,

Containing some further Queries concerning the New Covenant.

Query 1. What is the new covenant? Is it not an agreement between God and the soul in Christ, according to the law of faith, as the old covenant was an agreement between God and the people of the Jews, according to the law of works?

Query 2. Who is the Mediator of this covenant? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Doth not he prepare the heart for the covenant, bring into the covenant, keep in the covenant, preserve peace between God and the soul, and keep the soul in the way of truth and peace?

Query 3. Who is the Shepherd, King, and Prophet in this covenant? Is it any other than Christ, the Mediator? Is not he the King and Prophet raised up to rule in righteousness, and to instruct in the path of life? And is not his Spirit able to teach and instruct in all things, and able to govern and rule in righteousness all that are subject to his breathings, quickenings, and holy movings, and instructions in their hearts, who writes his law there, and guides and governs by the law which he writes?

Query 4. How come men into this covenant or holy agreement with God? Is it not by repentance and faith? Is it not by turning from the darkness, which is not of him, to the light which is of him? Is it not by turning from the Spirit of Satan to his Spirit,—from the standard and power of the wicked one, to the standard and power of the Holy One? What is it that God lifts up against the darkness of the enemy, but the light of his Spirit, which discovers where a man has been, and what he hath done, and gives him to repent thereof, and forsake all his dead works, and turn to the life and power which instructs and quickens him, in and by the Holy Spirit? And this is true conversion; and

thus a man feels the covenant of sin, death, and hell broken, and enters into a new covenant, a pure covenant, a living covenant, a powerful covenant, and comes to feel those things which the covenant contains, as his condition requires, and as his capacity is made able to receive.

Query 5. How do men come to abide in this covenant? Is there any abiding but according to the entrance? Is there any staying in the covenant, but in and by the faith that lets in? Doth not unbelief and disobedience keep out from it at first? And doth not unbelief and disobedience cut off from it afterwards? For there are sins against this covenant, as well as against the old? and the sins against this are more dangerous to the soul than the sins against the old. "Take heed (said the apostle) lest there be in any of you an heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God." And saith Moses, speaking of the prophet, or angel of this covenant, "Beware of him, and obey his voice; for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him, and whosoever hearkeneth not to this prophet, he shall be cut off." How can it be otherwise? For he speaks life, and he speaks it in the covenant to the circumcised ear, to the soul in the faith, in the obedience. *Hear, and your souls shall live.* So then he that hears not must needs abide in death; and he that departs from hearing him, must needs return to death.

Query 6. Whether there be any purifying of the heart, or any justification, or keeping the vessel clean, out of the obedience of the truth? "If a man keep my sayings," saith Christ, "he shall never see death." "If ye," saith the apostle, "through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." But if the deeds of the body be not mortified by the Spirit, if a man do not keep the sayings of Christ, doth he, or can he, live then? Is not this then the main thing in religion, that a man receive the truth in the faith, and that he feel the power of the Spirit of life bringing him into and keeping him in the obedience thereof? For it is the truth that saves; the living truth, the living knowledge, the living faith; the law of the Spirit of life that makes free

from the law of sin and death; and it makes free by its powerful working in the mind, working out, and preserving from, that which defiles, captivates, and destroys. For Christ comes with his power to save, with his power to break the bonds of darkness, and to set the captive free: with his power to dislodge and dispossess all the enemies, and sanctify the vessel to himself; and the effects of his power in and upon the heart are his salvation; and he that falleth short of the manifestation of the power of life to his soul, and of the effects thereof in his soul, is so far defective in point of salvation; for no man is saved further than he is redeemed and delivered from that which Christ comes to save him from.

Query 7. Whether the first thing of all to be witnessed in religion is not the Spirit of Christ? Is not the whole work to be done by him? And how can a man be certain concerning any work wrought in him, unless he be certain that it is he that works? How can I be certain concerning the knowledge given me, unless I be sure it be he that gives it? How can I be certain concerning any prayers or breathings arising in my heart, unless I be sure they be from him? How can I understand any scripture concerning Christ, or the knowledge of any spiritual thing, unless I be sure he open it to me? And how can I be sure of any thing that he giveth or openeth to me, further than I know him, and have the true sense of him in his nature and operations? So then, if the Spirit be my leader, guide, teacher, instructor in the way of life, in the covenant of life, in the things of the kingdom, in the knowledge of scriptures, &c., it is of great concernment to me to receive that ear and heart from God, which knows and understands his voice; for, for want of this, are all the defects, mistakes, miscarriages, and errors, in and about religion. But as men come to this, they come out of error into certainty, and know the one Christ, the one faith, the one baptism, the one body, the one church, and assembly of the first-born, the pure love, which is of and in the truth, the pure path of the kingdom, the way of holiness, which the ransomed and redeemed walk

in; yea, the Lord is One, and his name One among all that are here, and the pure one language, which is of the Spirit, wisdom, and teaching, is here received, and the one voice of the Shepherd heard, &c. But out of this are the janglings, strifes, contentions, debates, disputes; subtle, wise, entangling reasonings of the earthly, one with another, and all as one against the heavenly and spiritual.

Query 8. Did not the message which Christ sent his apostles to preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," contain the sum of the covenant? What doth God require of the soul, but believing in his Son (which includes repentance from the dead spirit and works), and receiving his baptism? To be baptized into him, into his death, into his life, into his nature, into his Spirit; to take up his cross, to bear his yoke, to be circumcised in him and by him, that he may love the Lord his God with all his heart, that the power, virtue, and life of love may constrain him to live wholly in and to God. And then doth not the promise of salvation to him that believeth and is baptized into Christ contain writing the law in the heart, putting the fear into the heart; putting the Spirit within to become the teacher, guide, strength, and comforter, and whatsoever else is necessary to the soul in the way to the kingdom?

Query 9. How is God merciful to men's iniquities, and remembers their sins no more? Is it not in the covenant, and according to the covenant? Is there not a warfare to be accomplished, before the soul come to witness the perfect blotting out of sin? Is not Christ the Mediator, the Judge to whom all judgment is committed? And doth not he judge his people for their transgressions against the law of his Spirit and life? And must not the soul, who will witness the days of refreshment, and the perfect blotting out of sin therein, wait upon the Lord in the way of his judgments, even till sin be judged and brought under, and God's righteousness perfectly revealed? Under Moses' law every transgression received a just recompense of reward, and shall he escape in the gospel who grieves the Spirit, who despises the Son, and gives ear to the enemy? Nay, nay;

the same covenant that holds forth mercy to the tender broken-hearted, to the believing, to the obedient, contains also righteous judgment against the transgressor of this covenant. Yea, judgment begins at the house of God, and ceaseth not till that cease which judgment is to. The Lord shall judge his people; shall not Christ judge his own family? Yes, yes; they that are of the family, and in the true sense, feel the Lord pleading with whatever is contrary to him in them, and they can rejoice therein, and sing of mercy and judgment, after the Lord hath done his work in them, and brought forth the quiet fruit of righteousness in their hearts thereby.

Blessed is he that experienceth these things, witnessing that from the Lord which preserveth out of all mistakes and deceits about them.

AN INQUIRY

After Truth and Righteousness, and after the People whom the Lord establisheth, and will establish therein;

In some Queries on Isaiah lviii. and also on Chap. liv.

Query 1. Are there any people to be found who exceed the state spoken of in ver. 2. of seeking God daily, and delighting to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God? They ask of me, said the Lord, the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Are there not many professions and sorts of professors at this day, who in God's sight fall short of this state, and yet think highly of themselves? Yet these the prophet of the Lord was not to spare; but to lift up his voice like a trumpet against them, because of their trasgression and sin which they committed, notwithstanding their thus daily seeking the Lord.

Query 2. What was the transgression and the sins which the prophet was not to spare them in, but lift up his voice

like a trumpet against them for? Was it not (among other things) for their wrong fasting, their wrong afflicting their souls, their wrong seeking of God, out of the meek, tender, merciful spirit? Doth God require such fasting or praying of any man? Or will the Lord accept such fasting or praying at any man's hand? Ah! how many fast and pray at this day, who never rightly considered, nor truly understood, what the fastings, and what the prayers are which God requireth, and which alone he will accept!

Query 3. What is the fast which God requireth, and will accept in all ages? Is not this it, "To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke"? &c. ver. 6, 7. Who can understand or learn this fast, but he that is taught of God?

Query 4. Are there any whose light breaks forth as the morning, and whose health springs forth speedily, and whose righteousness goeth before them, and whom the glory of the Lord gathereth up, or is a rearward to (as is promised to those who observe this fast), and whom the Lord is ready to hear and answer in all that they call upon him for? as ver. 8, 9. Doth not God teach his children in the new covenant to observe this fast? And they who are taught by him to keep it (and do faithfully keep it), do they not inherit this promise?

Query 5. Are there any now among the sons of men, whose light hath risen in obscurity, and whose darkness hath become as noon-day? Whom the Lord guideth continually, and whose soul he satisfieth in droughts, and makes fat their bones; and makes them like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not? Surely if there be any, who are truly taught of the Lord to observe that which leads hereto, they cannot miss of enjoying these precious promises: for he is faithful and true who hath promised, ver. 10, 11.

Query 6. Are there any at this day, whom God honoreth in building the old waste places, in raising up the foundations of many generations; in repairing the breach, and restoring the paths to dwell in? What are the paths that are

to be dwelt in? Are they not the same which the soul is to walk in? Is not the just man's path and his dwelling-place all one, even the light of the living, which he is both to walk and abide in? See 1 John i. 7. and Prov. iv. 18.

It is said concerning Christ, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John ii. 6. How did Christ walk? Did he not walk in the light of God's Spirit? in subjection to God's Spirit? Was not the fulness given him? Was not the Father always with him? And did not he act in the Father, and the Father in and through him? Now, doth not he give forth a measure of the same Spirit, of the same anointing, of the same power to become sons, unto all his? And are not they to walk according to the measure of light and life they receive from him? And he that walks according to this rule, can he err in so walking? Is not this the pure path, the living path, the path for the ransomed in the days of the gospel, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit? Oh that men could consider this with the true understanding, and know the way of life in the true sense and experience thereof! That which enlightens and gives life to my soul, is somewhat from Christ, even a measure or appearance of his pure Spirit; it is no less: and the law of life written inwardly is more to the soul than words written outwardly, though all the words that ever come from God's Holy Spirit are very precious, and greatly useful, to those to whom he vouchsafeth to give the understanding of them.

Query 7. What is the sabbath spoken of, ver. 13.? Is it the law sabbath, or the gospel sabbath? Is it inferior in nature to the fast before mentioned? What is God's holy day, which is the soul's delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, wherein the souls that enter into the true rest (by faith in him who is life) honor the Lord, in ceasing from their own ways, pleasures, and words? See also Heb. iv. 3. and 10.

Query 8. They that keep God's holy sabbath, do they not delight themselves in the Lord? Do they not feel the pleas-

ure of his day, and of his appearance in his day? Are not these of the true seed of Jacob (who prevail with the Lord for the blessing)? And doth not the Lord feed them with the heritage of Jacob, their father, even with the blessing of the covenant of life and peace for evermore?

SOME QUERIES ON ISAIAH, LIV.

Query 1. Is there such a state to be witnessed, either in the particular, or in the general, wherein the womb that was barren shall travail and bear, and sing for joy of heart and spirit before the Lord? See ver. 1.

Query 2. Is there such a state to be witnessed, as of the Maker to become the husband? Is not this a glorious state indeed, and a name better than of sons and daughters, signifying nearer intimacy and union than any other relation with the Holy One, the Redeemer of Israel? And do not such as come to this state, even to be married to the Lamb, partake more abundantly of his redeeming power and holy presence? See ver. 6.

Query 3. Are there some so visited and redeemed by the Lord, as that they shall never be cast off more, as that the floods of wrath shall never overtake them more, nor the covenant of their peace be removed? Ah, precious state! Blessed are they doubtless, who have been so visited and redeemed by God's mercy, as to be made partakers of it.

Query 4. Who is this that hath been afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted? Have there been any such in our days, who have been deeply afflicted for want of the presence of the Lord God of their life, who have been tossed up and down with tempest after tempest, and could meet with no comforter to speak a word in season to their weary souls? And hath the Lord appeared to these, visited these, built upon these, comforted these? Surely then, the poor whom he hath raised out of the dust, and the needy whom he hath lifted off from the dunghill, cannot but praise his name.

Query 5. Who is this, whose stones God lays with fair colors, and her foundation with sapphires? Whose windows God makes of agates, and her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones? Was not the covenant of life so adorned in the apostle's days? And is she not so adorned now again?

Query 6. Whose children are they, who shall be all taught of the Lord, and whose peace shall be great, who shall be established in righteousness, who shall be far from oppression, so that they shall not fear; and from terror, so that it shall not come near them? Is there such a generation of the heavenly birth, of the covenant of life, brought forth in this our day, who sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and make him their fear and their dread, but are not terrified with the wicked one, nor with the snares and engines of the ungodly? Surely they who are taught of God, have peace from him and in him, and are established in the righteous Spirit and life of his Son; they are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken or removed, by all the terrors and oppressing devices of the ungodly.

Query 7. By whom do they gather together, who gather together against such a people? Certainly it is not by the Lord, nor by any advice or counsel from him; but by the advice of that spirit which opposeth himself against the power and work of the Lord: and that spirit must fall for the sakes of those whom God hath raised up by his power, and undertaketh to defend. How tender was God of Israel after the flesh in the day of his delivering them! See 1 Chron. xvi. 19, &c. And will he not be as tender of his spiritual Israel, in the day of his redeeming and delivering them? Indeed, the opposition will be very great, but consider who shall have the victory, see Rev. xvii. 14. Certainly it is true, and sealed by the Spirit of the Lord, that patience, meekness, innocency, love, righteousness, &c., shall at length overcome all unrighteousness, enmity, oppression, cruelty, wrath, &c., and that spirit from which they proceed; and as they are overcome, and when they are overcome, the Lamb's Spirit shall reign and shine in the

glory of the Father. Oh! the sweet sense of this day, and further hope thereof; how doth it bear up the suffering lambs, in the midst of all their trials and tribulations!

Query 8. Hath not God created the waster to destroy? And hath not he power over him? And doth not he limit him in the midst of his destroying work? But did God create him to destroy his heritage? or will God suffer him so to do? They may indeed destroy the buildings which are not of God? but God is the wise, great Master-builder, who counted his cost before he began, and knew he was able to maintain his building, against all the oppositions and opposers, which could rise up against it.

Query 9. Can any weapon formed against the covenant of life, and the children thereof, who are taught of God, and have peace from him, and who are established by him in righteousness,—I say, can any weapon formed against these prosper? Every tongue that riseth up in judgment against them, doth not the holy tongue condemn? Is not this the heritage of the servants of the Lord, in this our day? And doth not the Lord say (whatever men say to the contrary) that their righteousness is of him? Indeed, whoever receiveth the true righteousness, receiveth it from the hand of the Lord, and knoweth it to be of him.

And this testimony we have, even from the Spirit of the Lord, who taketh away our unrighteousness and filthy garments, and giveth us righteousness from and in his Son's righteousness, even the very same wherewith the Son himself was clothed. For as the seed is but one, and of one, Heb. ii. 11. so the righteousness is but one also. Be not hasty in spirit, but wait to understand in the light and Spirit of the Lord, which is wisdom's place of giving true understanding to her disciples.

It is true, there hath been great darkness, and the true church hath been in the wilderness, and the remnant of her seed hunted and persecuted up and down the earth by the false church, which hath been cried up for the true. But, blessed be the Lord, the darkness is passing away, and the true light shining again; which light discovers and redeems

out of all that is false, into that which is true; so that he that is truth, and no lie, is again known, and he speaketh truth and no lie, and he aneinteth with the true and holy oil of life and salvation, all that are truly living. And now the kingdom of darkness is going down, and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ raising up and exalting; which is an inward kingdom, a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of life, a kingdom of peace, a kingdom of righteousness, a kingdom of holy power and dominion over sin and death in the heart. And this will spread and increase, to the blessing of persons, families, and nations (as they come to be sensible of and subject to the holy light and power thereof), with the blessings of Abraham, wherewith all families and nations are to be blessed, as they come to be unleavened from the serpentine spirit and wisdom, and leavened with the innocency and righteousness of the Lamb's nature and Spirit.

The mighty God carry on his work, by the same mighty arm of strength wherewith he began it; and open the eyes of this nation, that they may see their proper hope and interest; for indeed the Lord hath great love to this nation, and blessing in store for it (for the seed's sake which he hath sown and caused to spring up in it); though many trials and tribulations must first be passed through, and the spirit of enmity and opposition against the appearance of God's Holy Spirit and power worn out. Oh that men could come to that which gives the eye-sight, that thereby they might see aright, and no longer take the rise of their seeing from that spirit and wisdom, which misrepresents things.

Written in Reading jail, in the tender love, true innocency, and uprightness of my heart; which the Lord hath given me to suffer with for his truth's sake; about the latter end of the 4th month, 1671.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

THE

HOLY TRUTH AND PEOPLE

DEFENDED:

AND SOME OF THE

WEAPONS AND STRENGTH

OF THE

POWER OF DARKNESS, BROKEN AND SCATTERED

BY THE

LIGHT AND POWER OF TRUTH,

IN

AN ANSWER

TO THE

Chief Passages in a LETTER, written to me, and replied to by me, before my Imprisonment in this Place.

Where I have been a Prisoner above a Year and a Half, without any Law broken, or Cause given on my Part, who only came Innocently and Peaceably to Visit my Friends in Prison.

BY ME ISAAC PENINGTON,

Prisoner for the TESTIMONY OF TRUTH (for could I have denied TRUTH, I might have avoided the SNARE), at Reading Jail.

The Bows of the Mighty are broken; and they that stumbled are girt with Strength. 1 Sam. ii. 4.

THE PREFACE.

A LETTER was sent me from a dear friend of mine (bearing date the fifth of the eleventh month, 1671), who had long been greatly distressed, and could not find relief in the way of her former profession and church-fellowship; for whom I greatly travailed with the Lord, and towards whom my spirit was made very tender by him. I still felt the seal of God's love and mercy towards her, even in her lowest condition, deepest despair, and sorest captivity, through her great and manifold temptations; and my testimony to her at times, from the Lord, on this behalf, was sometimes of use to her, to bear up her spirit, till the day of God's visiting and redeeming her, with the virtue and healing power of his salvation; which, blessed be his name, she hath since had sweet experience of, and true peace and joy in knowing the true Head, holding him in the faith, and being held by him.

Now, this letter of an ancient acquaintance of mine, which I had answered long ago, one that belonged to Sir Henry Vane (as she signified in her letter to me) desired she should see; which is said to be an answer to a letter of mine. If my answer had gone along with it, I should have took no further notice of it; but it going without my answer, lest it should do hurt to those to whom the Lord hath done or is doing good, I am engaged in spirit to reply somewhat to it, and to give forth to others what the Lord giveth in to me, upon this new occasion. How greatly, truly, and purely I have loved the man, I will not boast (the Lord knoweth, with whose knowledge herein I am content): but, oh that this his paper might not be laid to his charge at the great day! which (I am afraid) it will, unless he repent of it; for indeed, it is not a fruit of life from God's Holy Spirit; but of the growth of Egypt and Babylon.

It was sent me in the form of a book, as if it had been sent abroad for special service. There was no name at it, as if it were an arrow to fly in the dark, and wound secretly: but no weapon formed against the Israel of God shall prosper, either from this hand, or any other; and every tongue that riseth up against them to judgment will God condemn. This is the heritage of the despised people and servants of the living God in this our day; whose righteousness is the righteousness of his Son bestowed upon them, wherewith he himself hath clothed them, as the anointed eye now seeth, and all eyes shall one day see, and tongues confess, to the glory of God the Father.

THE HOLY TRUTH AND PEOPLE DEFENDED.

He excepteth against those words of mine to him in a former letter (of Jan. 24. which I have not here by me), That when his eyes are opened by the Lord, he shall then acknowledge that we oppose no truths of the Lord, but hold forth what we have received from him.

To which he thus replieth: Is redemption by Christ's blood no truth of the Lord's? Which he chargeth one of us in particular, and many others in general, with denying.

Ans. We are gathered into that, and abide in that, in which no truth can be denied; and are in him that leadeth into all truth, and teacheth to deny no truth, that ever was held forth by the Spirit of the Lord. Some of us may not yet be grown up in understanding into the mysteries of the kingdom, which God hath revealed and made manifest to others; but yet we do not deny, but own one another in our several measures of knowledge and sense of things, and in our several growths. And we own and acknowledge, in God's sight, the several dispensations he hath brought forth, both before the law, and under the law and prophets, and in the time of Christ's appearance in the flesh; and after, when he sent his Spirit, and all the time the church was in the wilderness, and now she is coming forth again, in the brightness and glory of the Father, looking fair as the morning, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners. Nor do we disown any thing that is of God in the professors of this age; but only that which we know, and are required by him to testify against, as being not of him. Oh that they could weigh our words and testimony in a right spirit! for they would not then be so offended at, and speak so against us, as now they do. And the Lord knoweth we would do anything that lieth in us to remove the stumbling-blocks that lie before them; but it cannot be done to that spirit in them, before which God Almighty hath laid the

stumbling-block, that it might stumble, and fall, and be snared, and broken, and taken. But if they could come into another Spirit, and feel unity with, and the birth of, another Spirit, the birth of that pure wisdom should find no stumbling-block or offence in this precious dispensation of truth, wherewith God from on high hath visited us.

And as for denying *redemption by the blood of Christ*, oh! how will he answer this charge to God, when none upon the earth (as the Lord God knoweth) are so taught, and do so rightly and fully own redemption by the blood of Christ, as the Lord hath taught us to do! for we own the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, both outwardly and inwardly; both as it was shed on the cross, and as it is sprinkled in our consciences; and know the cleansing virtue thereof in the everlasting covenant, and in the light which is eternal; out of which light men have but a notion thereof, but do not truly know nor own it. And let him consider, before the time of antichrist, it was a great matter to know and own Christ outwardly, as he appeared in that body; but since the antichristian spirit had got that, the distinguishing knowledge and owning of Christ is, to know and own him inwardly. The outward knowledge and confession now (as it is generally separated from, and held forth in way of distinction from the inward) is but the knowledge and confession of Babylon, and not the true, living knowledge and confession of Christ, in and by the Spirit of the Father, which is the knowledge and confession of all the true and heavenly mother, which is the mother of all that are born of the Spirit.

He repeateth those words of mine, That we do not make any finite thing our righteousness; but Christ of God is made unto us righteousness. This, he saith, is well spoken, and wisheth we may always abide in this confession.

Ans. These words arose in me from an inward feeling of him who giveth righteousness, and of the righteousness given; and the Lord preserving me in that life, I shall feel so for ever, and confess so for ever. And truly I can testify of no other righteousness; for, blessed be the name of

my God, I feel the righteousness of his Son revealed in me daily, from faith to faith. In his name I have been gathered, in his name I live, and in him I feel righteousness; and indeed there is nothing but righteousness, holiness, truth, life, and salvation (and the like) in him.

And he that is truly in him, is righteous and holy in him; there being in him a new creating of all that are there, and a renewing into the holy and heavenly image, which consists in the righteousness and holiness of truth.

He desireth me to give a plain answer to this question:

Is Christ of God made our righteousness by faith in his blood, or in his Spirit?

Ans. A pretended faith in Christ's blood, without faith in his Spirit, is but dead and notional. "Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood (saith Christ) ye have no life in you. It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh (saith he) profiteth nothing." Now the faith must be in that which quickeneth, and the faith in that which quickeneth is holy and righteous, and the man who is found in it is justified, through that faith in the quickening power, in the sight of God. Thus Abraham was justified in the sight of God; and thus are the children of Abraham to be justified, even through believing in that holy power and Spirit which requireth obedience, and justifieth the obedient, and condemneth the disobedient for ever. Rom. iv. 24.

He saith, He fears a snake in this green grass, when I say, From his life, virtue, and power revealed in us, is our conformity to him.

Ans. It were better and safer for him to fear at home; for the snake is in his own grass, and many notional, high, soaring expressions, without true knowledge. But can there be any conformity to Christ without his life, virtue, and power inwardly revealed? What else can conform unto, and bring forth in, the image and likeness of Christ?

He saith, He feareth lest I make this life and virtue our righteousness, which is indeed the fruits of it.

Ans. Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge, and runneth out from the truth into his

own imaginations? What was Christ's righteousness? Was it not the life, the virtue, the Spirit of the Father in him, he being one with it, in the faith of it, and in the obedience to it? And is not the righteousness of the head and the body the same, communicated from the head to the body? Are they not all of one, and the righteousness one and the same in both? So much of Christ's Spirit, so much of his righteousness; and out of his Spirit, out of his righteousness for evermore. For the righteousness of the Son is revealed, and communicated from faith to faith, in his Spirit; and so Christ is indeed made righteousness to them that are found in his Spirit; and they are covered with the garment of righteousness and salvation, who are covered with his Spirit.

He saith, Our righteousness is before this.

Ans. What! is our righteousness before any of the life, virtue, and power of Christ revealed in us? Is God a respecter of persons? Doth he justify any out of the holy covenant before he hath made a change in him? How doth this man, with his vain imaginations, turn the whole way and counsel of God upside down.

He brings a scripture to prove this, The spirit is life for righteousness' sake.

Ans. That scripture (which is Rom. viii. 10.) speaks of those in whom Christ is and dwells; and there indeed "the body is dead because of sin, and the spirit is life because of righteousness." This is plainly spoken, and plainly felt and known as it is spoken. Oh that he had the true sense and understanding of it as it is in Jesus!

He saith, Righteousness is in order of nature before sanctification.

Ans. That which is holy is righteous; there is nothing righteous in the eyes of the pure God but that which is holy. The head was really holy and righteous, and they that are in him partake of his holiness and righteousness, and are really holy and righteous in him; and faith, which purifies the heart, and through which sanctification is, must needs be in order of nature before the justification which is by it; for God justifieth no unbelievers, but believers only.

Yea, the wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn unto the Lord; which cannot possibly be without some degree of sanctification, before the Lord will have mercy, and pardon the soul its sins. Isa. lv. 7. and chap. i. 16, 17, 18.

He saith, Justification is an act of grace passed upon us by God freely, without respect to us as godly; nay, properly reflecting on us in that moment as ungodly.

Ans. I charge this in the sight of God for absolutely false doctrine, and contrary to the gospel. For God justifieth no man as ungodly; but calleth upon men to repent, and turn from their ungodliness, and he will have mercy upon them, justify and save them. Now men are not ungodly in turning from their ungodliness, but changed; and so their state is in some measure changed before justified. If Abraham was ungodly when God called upon him; yet in forsaking his own country, and following the Lord, and offering up his son, he was obedient, and not ungodly, and in that obedience he was justified. A man may have notions of justification in his mind, and accordingly take himself to be justified, when he is not; but there is no man justified by the Lord till he be changed, translated into him in whom God justifieth, out of the place of condemnation into the place of justification. For till men are changed by the Spirit and power of the Lord, they are but darkness, and in the darkness, where no justification is. It is the believing, the obedient, the children of light, that are justified by the Lord.

He saith, Were we godly before or at that time, it were no act of grace to pronounce us righteous.

Ans. He that witnesseth salvation in Christ Jesus, witnesseth it to be a continued act of grace. Grace appears to the soul, grace teacheth, grace enableth, grace maketh a change from the ungraciousness of the heart and state; and then grace (or God by his grace in and through Jesus Christ) forgiveth the sins that were committed before. For though the Lord visit me with life, quicken me thereby, make a change in my heart and state; yet it is his mercy to accept

me, and to pass by for his name's sake my former debts and trespasses against him. Alas! the new covenant is wholly a covenant of grace and mercy; and the giving of Christ, drawing the mind to him, accepting and justifying in him, are works of grace and mercy towards his. So the spiritual Israel may well sing this song in the land of holiness and redemption, "O praise the Lord! for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." I can truly set my seal to this thing: that the more holy and righteous the Lord maketh me in his Son, the more sensible am I of his love, grace, and mercy, in justifying of me; and it is precious to me to witness justification and acceptance with him in and through his Son.

He saith further, But this is the bounty, the freeness, the munificence, the riches of the grace of God, to call things that are not as though they were.

Ans. Take heed of abusing that scripture. God sent Christ to renew, to redeem, to change, to make holy and righteous, to make people such as the Father might be pleased with, accept, and justify; and as Christ maketh them so, the Father receiveth and accepteth them as such. But God doth distinguish and call things as they are. He doth not call an ungodly man a holy man, a justified man; but when he hath changed him, new created him in Christ Jesus, took him out of his old stock, and planted him into the new; then he accounteth and calleth him so, and not before. It were better for men to wait upon God to understand what his Spirit meant in what he spake, than to put formed meanings of their own upon his words.

He wrests my words, charging and reproving me, as if I said, The love of God was a bare thing.

Ans. Those were not my words, nor did my words so signify; but my words were, That it is not by bare loving (or mere loving, or only loving) that God makes a man righteous; which is very true and manifest: for there is, besides his love (in and through that love) the sending of his Son, and revealing of his Son, drawing to and transplanting into his Son, to make holy and righteous in him. For holiness,

though it may be distinguished, yet it cannot be divided from righteousness; nor can a man possibly be righteous in God's sight, unless he be also holy in some measure. His reflecting words hereupon I pass by, though very unjustly and unchristianly cast upon me (without any just occasion given him by words), which I desire the Lord may make him sensible of, that he may be forgiven it.

He blameth me for saying, We make no finite thing our righteousness, and yet he saith, We make the measure of the Spirit (which each member of Christ receives) our righteousness.

Ans. A measure hath the same nature with the fulness. A measure of the Spirit and life, of the grace and truth which comes from Jesus Christ, hath the same nature that the fulness hath. All the life, all the new creation that comes from him, and dwells in him, is righteous, and found righteous wherever it is found. Yet I do not remember that we have thus expressed it, that that measure is our righteousness; but it is he who is the fulness, who is revealed in that measure; and it is he who is our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, our redemption; but it is in the holy, pure measure of the heavenly gift that he is made thus of God to us, not out of it.

He saith, The Lord our righteousness redeems us, not properly by the life and Spirit of his Godhead; though that was in the work, supporting, enabling him, and carrying him up, in that great undertaking; but by the death and sufferings of his manhood.

Ans. This is strange doctrine, to make the manhood the main Redeemer, and the life and Spirit of the Godhead but the supporter and carrier up of the man in the work of redemption; whereas it was the Word which created all, which also redeemed; he that left his glory, and made himself of no reputation, but came in the form of a servant, to do the will. It was the Spirit and life of the Father (even the eternal Son) which took up that body, appeared in that body, offered it up a pure and acceptable sacrifice to the

Father, finishing the work therein which the Father gave him to do. John xvii. 4, 5.

He saith, Shall we think to answer the law by our obedience?

Ans. We do not look upon the law of Moses, which was given to the Jew outward, to be the dispensation of the new covenant, or to be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but those who are in the new covenant, and have God's law written in their hearts, and his fear put there, which preserveth from departing from him, and his Spirit put within them, to cause them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and do them; and who live in the Spirit, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,—the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in these. Yet they do not magnify and cry up their own obedience (nor call it their righteousness), but him from whom their obedience comes. For in the measure of his grace and living truth the soul is one with him; and all that he is, and all that he hath done, is theirs; and it is he himself that is the righteousness of all that are in him: and they that abide in him partake of his righteousness from day to day, which floweth in like a stream upon them.

I wish he could consider in what spirit it is that he calls the white stone a ticket for the righteousness. Doth he know the white stone with the new name? It is no less than the foundation-stone, than the righteousness itself; and what doth he talk of bringing that as a ticket for the righteousness?

He seemeth to pass by some things (which I speak in tender love and weightiness of spirit to him) as the judgment of man in his day; but let him take heed, when he comes to appear before God, he then [will] find it was the judgment of God's Spirit in the light of his day; which day is inward and spiritual, which believers are to hasten to, and which approacheth in every heart, as the night spendeth and passeth away. And all true Christians and believers ought to wait for the passing away of the night, and the dawning of this day, and the arising of the day-star in their hearts.

He saith, Christ is now ready to be revealed.

Ans. I believe he is to be revealed further, and in fuller glory; but he is truly already revealed as the Saviour, Shepherd, and Bishop of the soul; and many are gathered home to their resting-place in him, which, while they were scattered up and down upon the barren mountains (before the Shepherd appeared and made himself manifest) they could not find.

He seems to strike at the peace and joy which is of God, and to give it a dash, Because minds estranged from the enlightenings and convictions of God have much peace in their ways, and such are under delusions.

Ans. We do not tell men of the peace and joy we have in our God boastingly; but in a faithful way of testimony concerning, and invitation to, what we once wanted, but now have found, under the leadings of the true Shepherd. And the peace and joy which he gives, is an evidence and assurance in the hearts of those to whom it is given by him. And they that have been greatly distressed for want of the Lord, and his powerful arm of salvation, having met with it, it riseth up from life in them to testify and say to others, *Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.* And oh that ye also were stripped of this dead, notional, comprehensive knowledge concerning the Saviour! That ye might meet with the Saviour himself, and receive that knowledge from him which is life eternal. And this, with the true peace and joy thereof from him, ye would find no delusion.

He speaketh, Of suffering loss, and of phrases and expressions: Better (said he) to suffer loss in these, than themselves to be destroyed.

Ans. Let him apply this home. Oh that he saw how those phrases and expressions, and imaginary knowledge, which he hath brought forth in this letter, stand in his way to hinder the true knowledge; and that he cannot possibly receive the true knowledge without being emptied of these, and parting with them for the excellency of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and without the true know-

edge of Jesus, men cannot but perish, and be overtaken with destruction.

Then for being helpful to establish persons in grace.

Ans. Such kind of doctrines as these do not tend thereto. They may establish men in such a notion of grace as he hath formed; but they neither tend to lead to, nor establish in, the grace itself, but keep men from it. Nay, I can truly say it from him that is true, that he himself cannot receive the grace, the thing itself, till he part with these notions. And oh that he might know the stone cut out of the mountain without hands to dash his image! that the Living One (who gives life) might be received by him, in that measure of grace and truth which he inwardly dispenses to all that travel out of the darkness of their own imaginations and conceivings upon the Scriptures into his pure light.

The main reason he giveth why he is not satisfied with that which I sent him, concerning the sum and substance of the true religion, is; because it fights with his notions, even a stating of our righteousness with God, according to his imagination; which is absolutely a mere dream, which he hath dreamed of in the night, and not seen in the light of the day. For the cry of the Spirit of the Lord is in the gospel-day; "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in." This is the truth, as God hath revealed by his own Spirit, in this our day; but to say this speaks of our state in him, without witnessing it in ourselves, is but a mere dream; and men cannot bring forth fruit to God, nor be lovely and pleasing in his eyes, but as their fallow ground is ploughed up, the thorns, thistles, briars, and that which is unclean and unholy, removed.

Christ, he saith, is the heavenly man, and mansion in whom we are thus blessed, and in whom we sit down in a state of rest and reconciliation, heavenly and divine, before and without the consideration of any works of righteousness which we have wrought, &c.

Ans. If he means this concerning the full sitting down in rest, it is directly contrary to scripture. For none sit down in that full rest, before and without consideration of works

of righteousness wrought by them. For that great judgment is a time of rendering to every man according to his works. Rest is the reward of the traveller, and his travels are not despised, but considered in his reward. Mark; every one that improved the talent, had a reward from his lord. "And come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," &c. Mat. xxv. And the apostle is of the same mind with Christ, when he saith, "It is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you rest," &c. 2 Thes. i. 6, 7. So that persons do not sit down in eternal blessedness in Christ, before or without consideration of any works wrought by them.

And then for sitting down in an heavenly, divine state of righteousness, rest, and peace in him here; it is a glorious state to be travelled to. There must be a translating out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son first. The kingdom must first be come, and the soul prepared to enter into it, at the gate which the Spirit opens to him in the way of the gospel. For it is one thing to know somewhat of Christ, and to begin to become a disciple; and another thing to learn of him so to deny a man's own wisdom and will, as to come to receive and be born of that which is true and living of him; and to learn to wait aright for the opening of the gate, and entering into the kingdom and land of life, and to be prepared to sit down with him.

For there is a state of discipleship, wherein a man hardly knoweth a settlement, so much as how to watch with Christ rightly and constantly; but it is a great matter to be able to dwell and abide with him. None can do this, *but he that can dwell with devouring fire and everlasting burnings:* for the pure word of life is a fire, and he that sits down in the heavenly place in him, must sit down in that fire.

This he reckons the firm, stable state, which indeed is no state at all. There is not a state in Christ without being in Christ; and then the state is according to the soul's being in Christ: for then the work of regeneration, the work of

[illegible] the work of justifying, &c., goeth on; and a man is [illegible] according as he is framed and new created in Christ, and not otherwise. So that the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ is found judging and condemning whatever is not of God, and justifying only what is of God in him. For the soul then comes into the new covenant, which requireth and justifieth that which is new, all that is wrought in God, and condemneth all that is wrought out of him. And so here is the true sense and knowledge of [illegible] the new and pure law of the new covenant; and the [illegible] given by him upon all occasions to those that wait upon him, and the sprinkling of [illegible] upon repentance. This is the [illegible] way of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he hath consecrated for all his, made known in the demonstration of his Spirit, which will stand for ever; whereas men's apprehensions about those things, which they have gathered and comprehended of themselves out of the Scriptures (in the supposed light of their natural reason and understanding), are but dreams, and will vanish even in their own hearts, if ever the true light arise there.

He saith, This state can never fall, nor be finally fallen from.

Ans. There is a way of coming to Christ, and there is a way of preservation in Christ. For there is a power that redeems; and men are preserved by that power in subjection to it. And so every one, *that thinketh he standeth, is to fear, and to take heed lest he fall;* and not to boast and say, *I am in a state of justification, which is firm and cannot be moved;* and it cannot fall, nor be finally fallen from. "For ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Keep to the power which preserves, "hold that fast which thou hast, let no man take thy crown." Keep the faith, make not shipwreck of it, and of a good conscience. Oh that men knew the right doctrine and way of coming to Christ! which they cannot do, till they are taught of the Father, John vi. 45. and the right doctrine and way of standing and abiding in him. For truly men's professed

coming to Christ, believing and standing at this day, is generally notional, outward, without; but not in the inward life and power itself, without which no man can come to him, nor stand nor abide in him.

He chargeth us, *With setting up a covenant of works; always doing and never done; a covenant to be performed by us, for ourselves, not by Christ for us.*

Ans. I would he saw in the true light how unjust and untrue this charge is. For the Lord God of life knoweth that he himself hath taught us the new covenant, and thereby taught us to wait upon himself in his Son, to work all our works in us and for us; and this we daily experience, that we can work nothing, but as he works in us. Therefore our whole course is a waiting on him in stillness, to witness him appearing and doing all in us; and blessed be his name, we do not wait in vain. But if he think all works are excluded out of the new covenant, he greatly erreth; for the works of God's Spirit are required and have a place therein; and God and Christ (the King and Shepherd) is the Judge of his people in the new covenant, and justifieth or condemneth according to the law thereof. In the faith and obedience he justifieth; in the unbelief and disobedience he condemns, without respect of persons.

And it is a precious thing in the gospel ministration to come to God, the Judge of all, and to witness true judgment set up by God in a man's own heart; that by the ministration of the pure judgment there, the soul may come to learn righteousness, of the holy Teacher and Shepherd, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is just and faithful under his Father, in the impartial ministration of the new covenant.

Hereupon several charges he brings against us, through his own mistakes and misapprehensions of us.

As, First, That our doctrine implies free-will and power in the creature.

Ans. We have never experienced free-will nor power, as of ourselves, but as we have been turned to God's power, and received it from him; nor did we ever testify to others, that they could receive and embrace truth in their own will,

and by their own power. Oh that this person had true discerning of, and were severed from, that spirit which thus chargeth us! For whoever receives this testimony concerning the inward light of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall never find himself able to do anything therein by his own will and power; but there witnesseth God's begetting him out of his own will, by the life and power of truth.

Secondly, He chargeth it, That it maketh the election of God altogether frustraneous.

Ans. Election of the seed, in the seed, it doth not at all make frustraneous; but men's wrong apprehensions concerning election out of the seed, the true doctrine of election doth not consist with. *He hath chosen us in him. So that in him*, to wit, in *Christ*, the choice is; and he that will *make his election sure*, must make the *seed sure to him;* growing in the nature thereof, wherein the election is to the truly obedient.

He saith, Our righteousness with God is the foundation.

Ans. But is there not somewhat, which is the foundation of our righteousness with God? And can we be righteous with God, till we come to that foundation, and be made righteous by it? Must we not first believe in him? And is not faith a gift which comes from the holy root, and maketh a change in them in whom this gift is found? Doth not faith make a difference between them that believe, and *them that believe not?* So that, so soon as ever there is true faith, and it thus works, the *state is changed;* and there is no justification before faith. For in the unbelief is the condemnation for ever. "He that believeth not, is condemned already." And what! is he justified there too, at the same time? Was Abraham, our father, justified in the unbelief and disobedience, or in believing and obeying God? For what saith the scripture? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

That which I spoke of, he saith, Is but the fruit and superstructure.

Ans. When Christ directs men to the seed of the kingdom, doth he direct unto the fruit and superstructure? I

spoke there of the seed, of the light, of the holy Spirit, of the quickening virtue; is that the the superstructure? Or is that the fruit of men's being made righteous? Nay; must they not turn to that, receive that, believe in that, even in the light of God's Spirit (for they are the true and right believers), before a man can come to be made righteous, or accounted righteous in the eyes of the Lord? For none are righteous, but in him; and all are out of him, till they be gathered into him.

He instanceth in one passage of mine (in a book entitled, "The Sum or Substance of our Religion, who are called Quakers")—the words are these: This is the sum of all, even to know and experience what is to be brought down into death, and kept in death; what to be brought up out of the grave, to live to God, and reign in his dominion; and what to be kept in subjection and obedience to him, who is to reign. Now to experience it thus done in the heart, the flesh brought down, the seed of life raised, and the soul subject to the pure, heavenly power, whose right it is to reign in the heart, in and by the seed,—this is a blessed state indeed; for here the work is done, &c. These were my words.

Now mind: God is the teacher in the new covenant. Now he that hath learned this of him, hath he not learned the true religion? And is not this a full sum and substance of religion? When the apostle saith, "Pure religion, and undefiled before God, is to visit the fatherless," &c. Alas! might this spirit have said against the blessed apostle, that is not the pure religion (not the sum or substance of pure and undefiled religion), that is but a fruit or superstructure! Oh that men had true sense and understanding! That they might savor the words that come from God's Spirit, and the words that come from their own spirit; and might not be offended at that which is true, pure, and living of him.

But having disliked this sum, he giveth one of his own, in these words following: I say, the sum, and that which first and mainly imports us to know, as the Lord hath taught me, is; That the old man is crucified with Christ,

and brought down into his grave, and that we are risen together with him, by the faith of the operation of God; and from this faith to be working with God; to mortify our members that are on the earth.

Ans. Doth not Christ send his apostles to preach the gospel, and give them this message, "That God is light;" and to turn their minds to the true light, that they might be enlightened by it? Doth it not import men first to know that whereby they might be crucified, before they can know themselves crucified thereby? So that Christ did judge this as the first thing necessary to be known in the preaching of the gospel; and bid men preach the light, and turn men to the light, and to the inward appearance and voice of God's word in their hearts. And what! are men risen together with him, by the faith of the operation of God, while they are yet in their sins, in their ungodly state? And how can any witness the faith of the operation of God in this state? Now it had been better he had forborne affirming, that the Lord taught him thus; for truly the Lord never taught any thus. This is not truth from God, nor will it be owned by the Lord as his truth, when he comes to appear before him; and he should have took it to himself, and not have put the name of the Lord to it.

But against this his own doctrine, he raiseth an objection in these words; Shall we mortify that which is mortified already?

His answer is; The old man which is crucified together with Christ, is the state of the flesh, and of enmity. This is past away, and in this is the concern of our righteousness, and justification properly.

That which remains to be mortified, are our members upon earth, which are the fruits of that evil state; and in the mortifying of these, is the concern of our sanctification. The will of God is done in heaven, &c.

Ans. Paul speaks of the law of sin in his members; and he also speaks of the body of death, and cries out against that; "Oh wretched man that I am," saith he, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He felt somewhat

that nourished and gave strength to the law of sin in his members, and looked upon himself as wretched, till he could meet with deliverance therefrom. Now some are of opinion that there is no being delivered from the body of sin, while in this life. Dost thou look upon it to be done in Christ, for us, without us; but never to be done by Christ in us? Let me tell thee, if ever thou come to witness the pure, eternal light of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in thee; that will not find out some members on earth only, but the very body thereof; and show thee the necessity of the putting off that body from thee, and that circumcision whereby it is to be done, which is the circumcision of Christ. Mark the promise of the new covenant: "I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, that thou mayest live." Is not this the circumcision of Christ? Doth not this cut off the body of the sins of the flesh, in the particular where this is witnessed? This is the truth, as it is in Jesus, even "to put off the old man with his deeds." It doth not say, *The body is put off in Christ without us*, and men must only put off *the members or deeds;* but, *they must put off the body*, and come to witness in themselves the very nature, spirit, root, and principle from whence they proceed, cut down and destroyed in them. They must feel *the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree*, and it *cut down* in them (not think it enough to say, it is done in Christ for them); yea, they must also witness *the Lord arising to shake terribly the earth*, in which the tree grew; that so the place of dragons and serpents (where each lay in times past) may henceforward become the place of holiness; where grass may grow, and the new plants and flowers of the paradise of God.

And how is the will of God done in heaven? Is it done in heaven after this manner? Have mercy and righteousness the preeminence, the leading of the van? (they are his own words) and said to go before, and look down from heaven after this manner (the body of sin being put off in Christ there)? Are there not those here on earth, who dwell in heaven? whose conversation is in heaven; even the wit-

nesses to God's holy truth, who are ascended up above the spirit of this world, and dwell in God's holy Spirit; and who walk in the light, as God is in the light? Hell is not far from the wicked; nor is heaven far from them who are renewed in the spirits of their minds, and who witness the passing away of the old things, and the new creation in Christ. Oh that he could look back (in a true sense) and see how he hath wrested those scriptures! Psal. lxxxv. 9, 10, 11. Isa. iv. 2. and Ephes. ii. 6. after his own imaginations: and, indeed, in this spirit, men cannot but turn the precious truth of God into a lie; that is, as to themselves, as to their own knowledge of it. It is known how the branch of the Lord is beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely, and in what day it is so; which day is, When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood, &c., by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. Isa. iv. 4. Then every one that is left shall be called holy, and the branch of the Lord shall be glorious in the midst of them, and the fruits of the earth excellent and comely for them. And then they that are thus purged, shall sit with Christ in the heavenly places; there being an abundant entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom. 2 Pet. i. 11.

Thirdly, He chargeth it with making the obedience and sufferings of Christ superfluous, except only as a pattern.

Ans. Christ came to do the Father's will; to obey, to suffer, *to taste death for every man;* to fight with and overcome the devil; to offer a holy, spotless sacrifice for all mankind, that through him they might witness atonement and acceptance. And the Lord saw the use of this, and we witness the use of this, and find every thing in its proper place and service in him, who is God's covenant of life and peace in us, and to us. But the work of this day is not to preach up a notional knowledge of these things (the Christian world, so called, hath been drowned and dead in them long enough), but to bring to that measure of the Spirit, to that sense of *grace and truth, which is come by Jesus Christ;* where-

in the benefit of these things is truly reaped and enjoyed; and, indeed, that is the work committed unto us from the Lord, who gave us this testimony to bear, whatever men may think or speak of us.

And whereas he speaks of our laying hold of passages, in his printed sermons, to favor our cause:

Ans. That is his mistake as to me; it was for his sake I mentioned it. There was, indeed, at that time, somewhat stirring in him, which would have gathered him, had he known and obeyed its voice, and not run out into lofty notions concerning it. He had some sense then of a glory approaching, which he might have from the true Prophet; though even then he ran out in his imaginations concerning it, and did not rightly apprehend, nor know how and when it appeared.

He hath further charges against us; Of crying up works against the work-man; man's grace and righteousness against God's; conformity to Christ against Christ; yea, to make a Christ of our righteousness, a Saviour of our conformity.

Ans. Oh, what will this man do, when the Lord shall show unto him that he hath charged not so much us, as the Spirit and power, and precious appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, with these things! We cry up works no otherwise than we are taught of God, and as the apostles and prophets have cried them up. Faith is necessary, and works are necessary in their places; and the justification of each follows them. And he that receiveth the Spirit of the Son, and therein doth righteousness, is therein esteemed of God righteous, *as the Son is righteous.* 1 John iii. 7. God ustifieth us in his Son, and loveth his holy seed too therein, and the faith that comes from him, and all the works that are wrought in him; and out of this holy root of life and power, is no man, nor his faith, nor his works justified.

Then for man's grace and righteousness. Where doth he hear us speak of man's grace? Oh! what doth he mean? Will he misrepresent the cause of his neighbor or brother, to make it bad? And for man's righteousness, we do not

cry it up or put it on, but testify men must be unclothed of it; and we ourselves were fain to part with it, and put it off, before we could be clothed with God's righteousness. But the works of life, the works of God's Spirit, the works of the new creature, the works of the new covenant; these are not man's works, nor unrighteous works, condemned by God; but justified in and through him that works them. The works wrought in us are truly acceptable, and we in him who works them, who is our righteousness. And concerning this people (these children of the new covenant) which the Lord hath begotten and brought forth in this our day, that scripture is fulfilled in them, and upon them: "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Isa. liv. 17. Well! as long as the Lord saith so, we matter not though others say, that our righteousness is of ourselves, and that it is our own righteousness; being assured that God's testimony in our hearts (as to this thing) will stand.

He aggravateth this charge thus: And this to be done by those that have been so far enlightened, and that account all the religion and profession in the world below them as carnal.

Ans. Indeed we magnify truth, life, the anointing, the spiritual, the inward appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which we have been turned, and in it made spiritual; and all other knowledge, faith, profession, religion (which hath not its rise here) we cannot but call carnal. For the enlightening Spirit of the Lord hath given us this testimony to bear, against all the dead, notional professors of this age, who build from the letter (or rather their apprehensions of the letter) out of the life; all which cry up names of the foundation and corner-stone; but refuse, reject, deny, and turn from the corner-stone himself; and have neither skill nor patience to try what he is, in this his pure, precious, living, powerful, and glorious appearance in the spiritual light of his inward day, after the long thick darkness of the foregoing night. And woe would be unto us, if we did not thus testify! For, for this cause we were born and brought into the world, to testify to the present appearance of our

God, and of his Christ, in this our day. Glory to him who hath called and chosen us to, and (in a true and precious measure and degree of his own pure life) made us faithful therein.

This (saith he) is so far from giving us a lift nearer heaven, that I cannot more properly resemble it than to the coming forth of Amalek, who met Israel by the way when they were come forth out of Egypt, and smote the hindmost of them, &c.

Ans. Do not talk of having a lift nearer heaven. Oh! learn the way, the holy way, the living way, wherein no dead, unclean thing can walk. Learn to know God's Spirit in yourselves, from that which opposeth his Spirit. Ye have been long learning, after your old conceivings and apprehensions of the letter; oh! at length come to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, which discovers sin and death, and the body of it, and crucifies and puts it off, and makes room in the heart for him that is true and pure.

And then for Amalek's smiting Israel, oh, how greatly are ye mistaken! Ye take yourselves for Israel, and us for Amalek; whereas, if your eyes were anointed, ye would see that we have been begotten and born of God's Spirit, through the Word of life, which was from the beginning, wherein we have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, that we might worship God in his own pure Spirit, and in his living truth; and that our God hath inwardly appeared to us, and led us out of Egypt's land, and out of Babylon also, and all the lands whereinto we have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day: and that this is Amalek's spirit in your several sorts of professors (through your dark imaginations and conceivings about the letter) which riseth up against us; and this spirit in you feareth not that God who hath appeared, and by his own holy arm of power hath led, and is leading us. So that we may take up the complaint of the prophet in this day, "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" For though we speak what we have heard, seen, and felt of the life which is eternal, and of the

"Word which was in the beginning;" yet ye are so far from the witness of God in your own hearts, that ye cannot receive our testimony, but oppose it with your dead, dry, notional, conceited, imaginary knowledge, which will stand you in no stead at all when ye come to appear before God.

Then he proceedeth, complaining against us thus: Ah, Sir! instead of clapping us on the back, and ministering to us in our journey, you clog our march, and fall upon our rear. Instead of serving the kingdom of Christ, which the church is now in travail of, you deny the first principles of the gospel, and wholly disown, the hope of Christ's second appearing and kingdom; knowing or acknowledging, as no other Saviour, so no other kingdom, but a principle or a light in yourselves.

Ans. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;" and this is the message of the gospel. 1 John i. 5.

And Christ, who is one with the Father, he is one and the same light with him; and we confess we look not for another besides him, nor for another kingdom, besides the kingdom which is revealed in him; for the kingdom which is revealed and manifested in and by him, is the spiritual, eternal, everlasting kingdom, and there is not another. We do not say the fulness, or that the full glory of the kingdom, is now revealed or enjoyed (nay, we confess we have but the earnest, in comparison, but a measure, a proportion); but this is the same in nature and kind with the fulness itself. And all that is of Christ, of his Spirit, of his nature, is saving; the least measure of his grace that appeareth in any heart bringeth salvation with it; the least touch of his finger hath pure life and saving virtue in it; yet this is not distinct nor separate from the fulness, and so it is not another, though it be not the fulness.

But whereas thou complainest of our not ministering to you in your journey, but clogging it. Oh that ye knew what your journey is, and whither ye are marching and travelling in that present spirit wherein ye act! We acknowledge it God's great love and mercy to us, to deliver us from that spirit, and from that way of knowledge, relig-

ion, and worship wherein ye still abide. And what we have seen and known from the Lord, that are we required of him to testify to you; and if your eyes were opened (by the principle of light from him) in the holy anointing, ye would bow to the testimony; but judging of it in a contrary wisdom and spirit, ye not only turn from it, but fight against it; and reproach and slander us for our faithfulness to the Lord, and good-will to you; which the Lord make you sensible of, and forgive you, that at length ye may know and receive him (who is the desire of all nations) in his pure, living, inward, and spiritual appearance.

And as for denying the first principles; that belongs to yourselves; for do ye not deny that light which is the foundation of all, and wherein and whereby all the mysteries of God's kingdom are seen; and instead thereof, set up a notional, comprehensive knowledge of your own conceiving, comprehending, and gathering from the letter; whereas no man can understand the letter but as he comes into and abides in the light? This we have experienced in ourselves formerly; for we were but guessing at and imagining concerning the letter, until we were turned to, and our minds gathered into, and comprehended in, the light of God's Spirit.

And as for disowning the hope of Christ's kingdom, the Lord knoweth that is far from us; for we ourselves bless him for what of his kingdom is already appeared, and wait and hope for the further and fuller appperance thereof. But this we confess, another Spirit, another Christ, another light, another life, another power, another kingdom, besides him who hath already appeared, we do not expect: for he is our King and kingdom both; and the least proportion of his life and Spirit received (bought with the loss of all, and so purchased and possessed) is no less than a pearl of great price, and a heavenly kingdom to him that enjoyeth it.

He addeth further: If Christ be but a principle, then we are no other; and only principles shall be saved, and no persons: Is this your gospel?

Ans. Christ is the promised seed, to which all the promises

are, in which seed all the families of the earth are blessed, as they are gathered unto, and grafted into, him. But he is not only the seed, but the seedsman also; who soweth of his life, of his nature, of his Spirit, of his heavenly image, in the hearts of the children of men. He giveth a measure of the grace and truth unto them, the fulness whereof he hath received of his Father. Now this measure of the light eternal is very precious, and is that wherein he appears and manifests himself. Yea, indeed, glorious things are both spoken and witnessed of the seed of life, of the seed of the kingdom, of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ; but we never said that this seed or measure of life is the fulness itself, but that which the fulness imparts to us, and brings salvation home to our doors by. And if any man will receive Christ, he must receive that from Christ wherein he manifests himself. There is a difference between the light which enlighteneth (the fulness of light, which giveth the measure of light, the measure of anointing to us), and the measure or proportion which is given, the one is Christ himself, the other is his gift; yet his gift is of the same nature with himself, and leavens those that receive it, and abide in it, into the same nature: so that not only the gift is one with him, but we also are one with him in the gift. Come, be not thus wise after the flesh, nor do not strive so (in thy wisdom and knowledge out of the truth) to triumph over the truth, and truth's testimony, in this the day of God's great love, and glorious arm of salvation, revealed in the midst of his people, which he hath gathered out of Babylon, and the dark knowledge thereof, into the light and kingdom of his own dear Son; where he giveth them eternal life, and of the fruits of the good and heavenly land.

He addeth: I firmly believe, and so have all the saints that have gone before, that Christ is a person, and his Spirit is a living principle in the hearts of all the faithful; but it is not the Spirit or principle in us that did redeem us, but the man Christ Jesus.

Ans. If he mean by the man Christ Jesus, the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the heavenly man, the Lord

from heaven, he who is One with the Father, the Word which was in the beginning, which created all things, I grant him to be the Redeemer; for it was he who laid down his glory, wherewith he was glorified before the world was, and made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and came as a servant, in the fashion of a man, to do the will. But if he distinguish Christ from this Word and Spirit, and make the man's nature the Saviour, and the Godhead only assistant to him (as he seemed to word it before, and as these his words seem to imply), that I utterly deny. For so testifieth the scripture, "I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour. I am a just God, and a Saviour," &c. So that Christ is the Saviour, as he is one with God. It was God's arm and power (revealed in him) that effects salvation. Yea, if I may so speak, his obedience was of value, as it came from the Spirit, and it was the offering it up through the eternal Spirit that made it so acceptable to God. So that we must not attribute redemption originally to him as a man, but as he came from God; and bring the honor all back to the spring and fountain from whence he had all, that God may be all in all, and the very kingdom of Christ may endure and abide for ever, in the root of life from whence it came.

And so he is not a foundation or the corner-stone distinct from God. He, as the foundation, was and is the rock of ages, the spiritual rock, both before and since he took upon him the body prepared for him. It is the Spirit, the life which was revealed in that man (by which he did his Father's will) which was and is the foundation whereupon all the living stones are built. There is a foundation of death, and that is the wicked spirit; there is a foundation of life, and that is the Holy Spirit, by which Christ himself was led and guided (in that his appearance in the flesh), which descended upon him, and he was anointed with, and all his are to be anointed with, and live in, the same Spirit. And he that knows Christ in this Spirit, he hath the true and abiding knowledge of him, and no otherwise. And though the names Messiah, Jesus, Christ, Saviour, Anointed,

&c. were given to him as in the flesh, or as man, they most properly and originally belong to him with respect to the divine life and birth in him, as the sent-one, and only-begotten, proceeding from the Father, the brightness of his glory, &c. For he, as the eternal Son of God, was the spiritual rock before he took upon him that body which was prepared for him, which expressly was called "the body of Jesus," and which he called "this temple;" and distinctly, he being called Jesus Christ come in the flesh, which every spirit that confesseth not, is not of God, but is that spirit of antichrist. 1 John iv. 3.

He speaketh of sitting on the throne of David.

Ans. It is a great matter to know that throne which David's throne signified, and Christ sitting thereon. His kingdom, his throne, are not of this outward, worldly nature, but inward and spiritual; and his throne is in his kingdom and temple, where he reigns, and is worshipped. He that knoweth Satan dishonored and cast out, knoweth also Christ come in, and sitting on his throne. Oh that men did give over their dreaming about the heavenly glory, and come thither in the leadings of God's Spirit where it is revealed!

Was the scripture written in vain concerning the glorious state of the gospel? "But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

He putteth up a prayer for us, That the Lord would awaken us, and make us do our first works, and return to our first love.

Ans. Ah! poor man, how is he blinded! not discerning how the Lord hath done this for us, and much more. But it is he himself that hath lost his first love, and doth not do his first works; but is found short of that tenderness, quickness, and savor that once was in him. Oh that he might see it, and return to him whose quickening virtue restores and heals?

He concludeth with the words of the prophet Jeremiah,

chap. xiii. ver. 15, 16, 17. "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive."

Ans. How doth this man mistake in his sight and application of scriptures, seeing and applying in a wrong spirit? It is true, the Lord hath spoken; but he himself, and many such as he is, have not given ear. And what is the reason, but because they are exalted above the pure principle of life in their own hearts? And are not such proud? Hath not he brought forth these weapons, these false charges and reasonings, in this paper, against the heritage of God in the pride of his heart? As for us, the Lord God hath humbled us, and taught us, who have learned, and daily learn of him, in the humility, and in humility and fear do we give forth our testimony, though also in the authority and majesty of our Master's name, whose name stands over and is exalted above every name, and his mountain and gathering is (in the pure authority and power of his Spirit) above all other mountains and gatherings whatsoever. And as for God's causing darkness, let him, and such as he is, look for it; for God doth not, nor will, cause darkness to them whom he hath gathered into the light of his Spirit; but saith to them, Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, O city and dwelling-place of the living God! But those that know not, or turn against his appearance, and cry up former dispensations of the same life and power, but reproach and blaspheme the present, on them doth he cause the gross darkness to fall and cover them. And this which he threateneth us with, is already fallen upon himself, when his feet are fallen upon the dark mountains; and whilst he looks for light, he hath lost that which once he had; and his very light (as he esteems it) is

become obscurity and gross darkness, and this dark paper of his (from the dark spirit and principle) makes manifest to all that shall read it in any measure of true sense or discerning. And truly my soul doth weep in secret for his pride and height of spirit, in opposing the Lord, his truth, and people. And for this cause shall those, who have looked upon themselves as the children of the kingdom and flock of God, be laid waste; and know, that as it was a dreadful thing to oppose Christ Jesus, the Lord, in his appearance in flesh, so is it also dreadful to oppose his appearance in his Spirit and power, wherein he is arisen to set up his kingdom, and to throw down Babylon, which is built in the likeness of Zion, but by and in another spirit.

Those in whom there is any tenderness towards God (and true breathings after him left) the Lord give them the sense and true understanding of this inward, spiritual appearance of his Son, and of what they have been doing, and are doing, against it; that they may not continue to fight against the Lord, and kick against that which is able to wound and prick, to their own hurt, and eternal ruin. For there is not salvation in any other name than in that which is now revealed; blessed are all they that trust therein, it being not another, but the same that ever was.

TO HIS POSTSCRIPT.

He beginneth it with the justification of that passage of his in a foregoing letter of his to me, wherein he saith, Christ is heaven, and I am hell.

Ans. When God visiteth man, he finds him in union with hell, death, and darkness; and the man is dead, is dark, is of a hellish nature and spirit in that state: but when the Lord hath converted him, cut him off from that root, leavened him with the Spirit and nature of his Son, is he hell still? "Ye were darkness," saith the apostle, "but now are ye light in the Lord. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in

the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

A man can be but hell before he is washed, before his filth be purged away by the Spirit of judgment and burning, before the old leaven is purged out, and he sanctified and made a new lump; but after the Lord hath thus changed him, and new-created him in Christ, is he still hell?

He saith: He doth not call the new creature hell; but there is an old man, an outward man, as well as the new man, and the inward man; flesh as well as Spirit in the regenerate.

Ans. What doth he mean by the outward man? The sinful body, the body of flesh is within. The outward body, that is not hell; that is the temple of God, where the heart is sanctified: and the pure Word of life sanctifies throughout, even in soul, in body, in Spirit, those that are subject to it. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the living God"? And your spirits much more, for God is a Spirit, and he dwells in a spiritual temple, and his tempel is holy.

He addeth: And unless your attainment be beyond Paul's, he found that in him, that is his flesh, dwelt no good thing; and the flesh lusting against the spirit, so that he could not do the thing that he would.

Ans. Paul did once experience such a state; that he felt himself carnal, sold under sin; when he did not find how to perform that which was good, but did what he hated, the law of sin being strong (in his members) against the law of life in his mind; which state he calleth a state of captivity to the law of sin in his members, and calleth it a wretched state. Rom. vii. 23, 24. But did Paul never experience another state? Did he never witness the virtue and power of the new covenant, even the law of the Spirit of life, and the power thereof, freeing him from the strength and captivity of the law of sin in his members? There were young men, John speaks of, who were strong, and had overcome the wicked one. Did Paul himself never attain to that state? He bid others be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and showed them how to resist in it, so

as to overcome. Did he never experience and witness it himself? He said, He had fought a good fight, and was more than a conqueror. What! was he then a captive to the law of sin in his members, and did he then cry out, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? He said, He could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. Was not that a state different from that other wherein he found only to will, and could not do the good he desired, but did the evil he allowed not, but hated? And blessed be the Lord, there are many at this day who witness a further state of redemption and deliverance from sin, and the law thereof in the members, than that state of captivity was, which Paul there expresseth his former groanings and complainings under. For he was not in that state of captivity when he wrote that epistle, but knew the dominion of grace over sin, and bid that church, Be subject to the grace, and not give way to sin, but yield their members servants to righteousness unto holiness, chap. 6. For that other place, of the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, Gal. v. 17. he doth not there speak of himself, but of the Galatians, who were in a weak, low, and (indeed) fallen state, from the Spirit and power of the gospel, having let in that which was contrary thereto. And so he strives to gather them into the Spirit again, and bids them live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and so they should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh: for in the new covenant man is taught of God the holy lesson of ceasing from evil, and doing good; and taught in the virtue and power of the covenant; so that he learns daily, and grows daily out of deceit into truth, until he come to be a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile. And so in the spiritual war, the house of Saul grows weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger, until Saul's kingdom be at length overturned and wholly destroyed, and the kingdom of David established in righteousness for ever and ever. Then Jerusalem, the holy building, the city of the living people, the city of righteousness (the habitation of righteousness, and mountain of holiness), is known, and Jerusa-

salem is witnessed a quiet habitation, there being peace in all her borders. Then the mind is fully staid upon the Lord in all conditions, and he keeps it in perfect peace. Then the soul is careful for nothing; but in every thing makes its requests known to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Surely the apostle had learned himself (when he taught others this) *in every state to be content.* He knew *how to be abased, and how to abound, &c.* Oh glorious state! Oh pure state of pure life in the heart! And what if I should add, Oh perfect state! The apostle James saith, "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," or in nothing. James i. 4. When Paul had so learned Christ that abundance could not lift him up, nor want deject him, or cause him to repine or distrust, what did he want of this perfect state?

His next words are, If you have no sense of this, your state is never the better to be liked.

Ans. Christ led captivity captive; and the same power is revealed to lead captivity captive in us. And truly when God leads our souls out of captivity, putting his fear within us, writing his living, powerful law of life in our hearts, and putting his Spirit into us, leading us in the way of holiness, and causing us to walk therein, we find this a better state than when we were groaning under deep captivity.

Further he saith, If your peace and joy stand in seeing no sin yourself (in yourself I suppose it should be), I shall more than suspect it not to be the peace and joy of Paul and all the saints, but a delusion.

Ans. Our peace and joy is in him who is without sin; and it abounds in us, in his cleansing and delivering us from sin; and we have found him remove sin as far from us as the east is from the west; and as he removeth transgression from us, and bringeth sin and the power of Satan to an end in us, he giveth us of his peace and joy. And truly we do not only witness him destroying sin and the works of the devil, but breaking the very head of the serpent, casting

him out, and piercing Leviathan, that crooked serpent, and slaying the dragon that is in the sea. And though such as he may suspect our peace and joy; yet, while Christ gives it us, and maintains it in us, it is very sweet and pleasant to us; and the time may come, that he may wish from his heart that he might partake with us therein.

He concludes the matter thus: We are without sin in him, but in ourselves nothing but sin.

Ans. He spake of delusion just before; a greater than this I do not know. For Christ doth make a real change; if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation, there is a real change. The man is not what he was before; but he puts off that which is old, and puts on that which is new; and so is really changed in his state, and in the sight of God, and is not what he was before. The heart, when it is really renewed, and washed by the water, blood, and Spirit, is not the old, abominable, wicked, deceitful heart that it was before. If this be his knowledge and experience, let him keep it to himself: for my part I desire not to partake with him therein; but to be like Christ, my Lord and Master, even sanctified throughout in soul, body, and spirit, that I may become wholly his, and the enemy of my soul have no part in me.

He saith, Christ shall appear without sin to salvation.

Ans. I grant it; but when, and how? Doth he not inwardly appear without sin to salvation to those who have waited for, hastened, and come to, the inward day? Doth not Christ appear without sin to salvation inwardly in the day of his own Spirit? Is not salvation then witnessed for walls and bulwarks? Is not the glorious salvation of the gospel brought forth in the gospel-day? And is not there in the life and dominion of grace a pure defence about all the glory? Is there any sin in the grace and Spirit of the gospel which appears and shines in the day of the Lord? And doth not this grace bring salvation to them that wait for the revealing of it?

He seemeth to clear himself of watching for our haltings.

Ans. Had he not watched for our haltings, and received

things into, and considered them in, the prejudiced part, he could not have written such a paper against truth and us, so far from true understanding and judgment as this is.

But he saith, He hath watched for our repentings.

Ans. If we should repent of having our eyes opened by the Lord, and turning to his truth, and receiving his Holy Spirit, and of having the precious promises of the Scripture made good to us, and fulfilled in us, we might justly lose our portion and inheritance of life for ever. We have repented from dead works; but we cannot repent of God's pure truth, and the living way, spirit, and power thereof. But this I can tell him, and that from the Lord, whose name I reverence and worship in, that the Lord watcheth for his repentings, and turnings from that spirit in him which darkeneth him concerning, and prejudiceth him against, the truth.

He beseecheth me in love, &c., and requireth me to clear myself of free-will, falling from grace, denying election of persons, and imputed righteousness.

Ans. What the Lord requireth of me, that I must mind; and I have divers times expressed my heart nakedly in these things.

The principle of life which the Lord hath raised in me, in that is the freedom to do good, and in that am I made free by Jesus Christ, my Lord. And I had rather witness him upholding me by his power, than contend about a notion of falling or not falling away. And my care hath been about making my calling and election sure in him, who is sure to those that are of him for ever. And I have witnessed the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in me, and imputed to me, and my soul clothed therewith in his sight; blessed be his name.

Oh that the professors of this age might come to the anointing, and see those things in the anointing! then would they know the truth and harmony of the Scriptures therein. But men, by the letter without the Spirit, can never discern or find out the mystery of life; but only gather into their minds and retain a literal knowledge, that killeth.

He bids me, Love the truth better than a party.

Ans. The Lord knoweth he hath taught me so to do: for had it not been for the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in his people, I could never have owned them. (For oh, how low was the knowledge they held forth, in my eye, before the power of the Lord reached to my heart, raising up his own seed in me, wherein I knew them!) And the Lord also knoweth, that it is in him that I love, and discern, and honor them to this very day: yea, I see his name written on their foreheads, and them brought forth in the glorious image and heavenly life of his Son (though it be hid from the wise eye of the professors of this age), and in the true light, with the true eye (which God hath opened in me) have I seen it.

He speaks of Clinging together, and keeping up a party against all right.

Ans. Nay, nay; this is the gathering of the Lord Jesus Christ by his Spirit and power, after the long night of darkness; and we are kept up by the same Spirit, and power, and life of truth, which gathered us.

He saith, It is not a calling for a work within, which will give you authority to lay waste Christ and the gospel, in the most fundamental and concerning truths thereof, and those above mentioned, &c. And above all the rest, denying the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and making him but a light, or notion, or principle in the heart of man.

Ans. This is but his own mistake, not a true and just charge against us, as he will one day see. The Lord hath not taught us to lay waste, nor do we lay waste any truth of the gospel; but own every thing in its place. And though our religion do not lie in notions concerning him, but in the principle of life itself, even in the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ (which is a measure of light from him, the full light); yet we do not learn thereby to deny the full light, but the more to acknowledge it. And we own him to be the true and full light, and his outward appearance in that body, in the fulness of time, to fulfil the Father's will therein; and his apparance in Spirit and power

in the hearts of his people in the day of the gospel; and his setting up his spiritual and glorious kingdom there, where he reigns as king on the throne of David over the spiritual Israel of God.

Come, consider seriously: Do not ye yourselves fall short of not only the principle and power of life, but also of the true knowledge of things according to the letter?

He confesseth, There is too little power; and without it profession is little worth.

Ans. Oh! that the professors of this age knew the Scriptures and the power of God, and had that knowledge which comes from, and stands in, the power! For then that evidence and demonstration of truth would be witnessed which puts an end to the disputes and reasonings of the mind; and then the great care would be to live the life of that which God makes manifest and requires in the new covenant.

He saith, To pull down the pillars and principles of the gospel, is the work the devil employs his power in.

Ans. I grant what he saith is true (and wish he knew how rightly to apply it); but there is a great error and mistake in his judgment about it. For the Lord is pulling down that which men have built up, which they may, in their mistaken judgments, call principles and fundamentals, and is building up that which men have trampled on, even the tabernacle of David, which hath long been fallen down; and the city of the living God, which hath long been trodden under foot of the false Christians; and the power of the devil is greatly at work to oppose this appearance and mighty work of the Lord in this day. Let him take heed of blaspheming the Lord's power, calling it the devil's, and owning the devil's power for God's.

He concludeth thus: Come to the point. What singular thing do you more than moding and wording it, save only that out of you have risen men, that have more audaciously lifted up a standard against the sealed and experienced truths of the gospel, than ever I have heard or read of any before you? You talk of words, and boast of per-

fection: I tell you a humble sense of a man's nothingness, driving him out of himself to live and glory in Christ alone, is better than all such boasted perfections a thousand times. Sir, accept my zeal for your soul.

Ans. We are a people (many of us) who have gone through great distress for want of the Lord our God, and exceedingly waited and longed for his living and powerful appearance. And for my own part, this I can say, that had not this appearance been in power, and in the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit to my soul, reaching to, and answering that which was of him in me, I could never have owned it; so deeply was I jealous of it, and prejudiced against it. And since my mind hath been turned to the pure Word of life, even the *Word which was in the beginning* (I speak as in the Lord's presence), it hath had singular effects on my heart. The light hath so searched me as I never was searched before, under all my former professions; and the Lord hath given me a true and pure discerning of the things of his kingdom, in the light which is true and pure; and singular quickenings have I met with from his Spirit, and the faith which stands in his heavenly power, and giveth victory and dominion in him; blessed be his name. And the love which he hath given me is not notional, but ariseth from his circumcising my heart, and answereth his nature; springing forth purely and naturally towards him, and those of his image, and all his creatures; yea, towards those who are enemies to me for his name's sake.

I might mention the patience also, and faithfulness to his truth, with the long-suffering spirit, which cannot be worn out; which his Spirit testifieth in me to be of a singular nature; with many other things. Nor am I alone, or the chiefest; but have many equals; yea, there are such as far exceed me in the heavenly and divine image of my Father. And the fruits are according to the root of life in us; and so acknowledged by all who look upon us with the true eye, with the eye of God's giving and opening.

Now, the same that hath wrought thus inwardly in us, the same hath required some outward behavior and expres-

sions from us, which are foolish and weak to the eye of man's wisdom, but chosen of God to hide the glory of this life from that eye which discerns it not, but despises the day of small things. And though this be the least part of our religion (yet subjected to, because it is of God, whom we dare not disobey in the least), yet the spirit which is contrary to God casteth this upon us, as if this were all, or at least the main, wherein we differ from others. Some call the living words of truth from us (when God, according to his good promise, giveth them us) but canting; and thou callest all that is singular in us but *moding and wording of it.* Alas! it is in the main we differ from you; we holding our religion as we receive it from God, in the light and life of his Spirit: you, as you apprehend it from the letter. Christ is our rock and foundation, as inwardly revealed; yours but as outwardly conceived of. We believe with the faith which is of the nature of him whom we believe in, which faith is mighty through God, and works through all the powers of darkness, giving victory over them all, in God's way and time; ye believe with a faith which esteems victory, and a perfect and entire state (wanting nothing), as impossible while in this world. And as our root differs, so all that grows up in us differs from yours: so that indeed all is singular that is in us, and all also is singular that is brought forth by us, as the Spirit of the Lord, who knoweth the difference of things, witnesseth.

Have we so long walked in the name and Spirit of our God amongst you, showing the singular virtues of his Spirit daily in our faithful testimony, sufferings, patience, and conversation? And do ye still cry, What singular thing do ye? Just like the Jews, who, after all Christ's mighty works, and demonstrations of his Father's virtue and power outwardly, *asked for a sign.* Oh that your eyes and hearts were opened by the Spirit and power of the Lord! for then ye would soon see otherwise in this respect than now ye do.

And then as for that expression, Of audaciously lifting up a standard against the sealed and experienced truths of the gospel, that is but an over-confident expression, through

prejudice and mistake of judgment at least: for I can truly testify I have never learned, since the pure, heavenly light of the Lord Jesus Christ hath shined on my spirit, to deny any one truth that ever was sealed to me, or experienced by me, in the days of my former profession; for whatsoever was then of God hath been restored to me, and that only which was of the flesh pared off. And I have ground also to believe, that it is so with others in this respect as it hath been with me.

He speaks, As if our difference or talk were about words.

Nay, it is about things: for though we own the same Lord Jesus Christ to be the foundation of life; yet after a different manner. Ye, as ye notionally apprehend concerning him; we, as we experience him to be the precious stone and foundation of life in us. And we testify of justification and sanctification, as we witness him bestowing it upon us, and working it in us.

But for boasting of perfection, I wonder how he dares speak thus! What! is there no fear of God before his eyes, or in his heart, that he dares charge us with that which is so utterly false? Where is any of us that did ever boast of perfection? But that God's power and covenant is able to make perfect, and that God's will is our perfect sanctification in soul, body, and spirit; even that we be wholly leavened with the salt of the kingdom, and become a fit temple for him. This we humbly and reverently testify of, and press towards, in his holy name and fear.

And as for that humble sense, Of a man's own nothingness, drawing him out of himself, to live and glory in Christ alone, this we meet with, and witness in that light which this generation of professors despiseth. But others, though they may talk of it, can never come truly to witness it, but in that light wherein God bestoweth and preserveth it.

Well, the professors of this age, who despise the light, shall one day find, that what they take themselves to be, they are not, in God's sight; nor are we, before him, what we are reproachfully represented by them; but "we are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created by him unto good

works;" and that it is natural to us to bring forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness to our God, however men reproach us.

As for his zeal for my soul, which he desired me to accept, it is strange zeal, and would tend to my utter destruction, had it power over me; but blessed be my God, who hath called me into the light of his Son, and I am satisfied that he will preserve me therein, even in that holy Spirit of life which he hath gathered me into, from all deceivable spirits of darkness whatsoever, in that holy covenant wherein his strength appears to me, and is revealed in me. And oh, that he might know what that spirit is wherein he hath thus appeared against the Lord (though under a pretence as if it were for him), and bring forth no more the fruits of it!

For a close, I shall add a few words on that scripture, Phil. iii. 3. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." It is a precious thing to witness this scripture fulfilled in the heart; to experience that there, which inwardly circumciseth, which cutteth off the foreskin of the heart, which lieth over it and veileth, till it be cut off by the inward appearance of the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ inwardly revealed. Then when this is done, I can truly and sensibly say, *I am a Jew inward.* How so? How can that be proved? Why, I am inwardly circumcised. I have felt that within which circumciseth the heart, and have borne the inward pain and cutting thereof, and am circumcised by it. That which stood between me and the Lord is cut off, the veil is taken away, the stiff-neckedness and unsubjection to God removed, the wall of separation is inwardly broken down, and now I am in true unity of Spirit and communion with my God, even with the Father, and the Son, in that One Holy Spirit wherein they are One.

Now I can bow before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. and worship him in his own Spirit, even in the new and fresh life thereof day by day. Now my rejoicing is in Christ Jesus, whom the Father hath sent, both outwardly in a body of flesh to fulfil the holy will, and do what therein

the Father had for him to do, and also inwardly in his Spirit and power unto my heart, to destroy the works of the devil there, and so to work me out of the enmity and unreconciled state, into the love and reconciliation. And I cannot but rejoice both in what he did in his body of flesh for me, and in what he doth by his Spirit and power in me. And, blessed be the Lord, I feel him near, his Spirit near, his life near, his power near, his pure virtue near, his holy wisdom near, his righteousness near, his redemption near; *for he is my rock, and my strength, and my salvation, day by day.* And I have no confidence in the flesh, in what I am, in what I can do after the flesh; but my confidence is in him, who hath weakened me, who hath stripped me, who hath impoverished me, who hath brought me to nothing in myself, that I might be all in him, and that I might find him all unto me. He is my peace, he is my life, he is my righteousness, he is my holiness, he is the image wherein I am renewed; in him is my acceptance with the Father; he is my Advocate, he is my hope and joy for ever. He hath destroyed that in me which was contrary to God, and keepeth it down for ever. He is my Shepherd, his arm hath gathered me, and his arm encompasseth me day by day. I rest under the shadow of his wings, from whence the healing virtue of his saving health droppeth upon my spirit day by day. Oh! I cannot tell any man what he is unto me; but, blessed be the Lord, I feel him near, his righteousness near, his salvation daily revealed before that eye which he hath opened in me, in that true, living sense wherewith he hath quickened me.

And now, ye that have high notions, and rich, comprehensive knowledge concerning these things, but not the thing itself, the life itself, the Spirit itself, the new and living covenant, and law of life itself, wherein alone Christ is livingly revealed,—ah, how poor, miserable, blind, and naked are you, in the midst of all your traditional knowledge and pretended experiences concerning these things!

Come, be quiet a while, and cease from bitterness of spirit, and reviling the work and people of the Lord; for the Lord knoweth, and will make manifest, both who are

his, and who are not his. All the living stones are his; but the great professors of the words of scripture, without the Spirit and life of the Scriptures, are not his, nor ever were, nor ever will be owned by him.

Come, learn to distinguish from God by his life, by his anointing, by the everlasting, infallible rule, and not by words without life, where the great error and mistake hath been in all ages and generations. The great way of deceit hath long been (and still is) by a form of godliness, without power: be sure ye be not thus deceived; for if ye miss of the power which saves, ye cannot but perish for ever. And what if the appearance of the Spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ inwardly, which is that which saves, be as strange to your sense, understanding, and judgment, as his outward appearance was unto the people of the Jews? Take heed of their spirit, take heed of their judgment, who judged according to the appearance of things to them, which they imagined and conceived from the Scriptures, but judged not the true and righteous judgment, which only the children of the true wisdom can.

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE are four or five things very precious, which were generally witnessed in the days of the apostles among the true Christians, which are all mentioned together. Heb. vi. 4, 5.

First, They were truly enlightened.

The ministers of the gospel were sent by Christ, to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Acts xxvi. 18. 1 John i. 5. And they were faithful in their ministry, and did turn men from the darkness and power of Satan to the light of God's Holy Spirit; and they were enlightened by it, and received power through it, and so came to be children of the light, and to walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Secondly, They tasted of the heavenly gift.

What is the heavenly gift which Christ gives to those who come unto him, and become his sheep? He gives them life, eternal life. John x. 27, 28. He brings them out of death, and gives them a savor and taste of the life which is eternal. This was it which the apostles testified of, even of the life which was manifested in that body of flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 John i. 2.); and they that turn from the darkness to his light, he gives them a taste of the same life.

Thirdly, They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

The gospel is a day of bringing forth the spiritual seed, and of pouring out the Holy Spirit upon them. The law state is a state of servants; the gospel, of sons! and because true believers in Christ are sons, *God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts to cry, Abba, Father.* And God cannot deny his own Spirit to his children that ask it of him; he knoweth how absolutely necessary it is to the state of a son; and whosoever truly receiveth Christ, *Christ doth give him power to become a son;* which power is in, and with, and cannot be separated from, his Spirit. Yea, the Spirit of Christ is so necessary and inseparable from him that is Christ's, that the apostle expressly affirms, that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9.

Fourthly, They tasted of the good Word of God.

Of that Word from which the gift comes; of that Word which was in the beginning of the world, which is ingrafted into the hearts of those that truly believe; which Word is able to save the soul.

Fifthly, They tasted of the powers of the world to come.

Of the power of the endless life, whereof Christ is the Minister, and according to which he ministers life, in that holy, true, living, inward, spiritual temple, which he pitcheth and reareth up for an habitation to God in his own Spirit.

Now, in the apostasy and night of darkness which hath come over the Christian state, these things have been greatly lost. For there have been none that have been found able to turn people to that light which the apostle directed to.

None could tell men where the light is to shine, and where men were to expect it, and wait for it. None were able to direct men to the seed of the kingdom within, to the Word of faith, the Word of the kingdom, nigh in the heart and mouth; much less were they able to instruct men how they might know and distinguish it from all other seeds, and the voice of the Shepherd from all other voices. Here it came to pass, that though at times God visited and opened men's hearts, a little warming them by the breath which came from himself; yet they not knowing how to turn to the Lord, and wait upon him for preservation in the gift and measure of his own grace, the good hath soon been stolen away from them, and the building which hath been raised up in them hath not been a building of life according to the Spirit, but a building of wisdom or knowledge concerning the things of God according to the flesh; and so the building that hath been raised up in men's spirits hath been Babylon, instead of Zion.

But the Lord hath had a remnant all along the apostasy, who felt some begettings of life, and had in measure some sense and taste of the heavenly things. These mourned after that state which was once enjoyed, and felt their want of it, travelling from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place, which none could rightly inform them of. Now, for the sakes of these, God hath at length appeared.

How appeared? may some say.

Why thus: he who is light hath appeared inwardly, causing his light to shine inwardly, causing his life to spring inwardly; so that he who is light, who is life, who is truth, is felt and known in his own inward visits, breakings-forth, and appearances. For God, who is a Spirit, his appearance is spiritual, his day is spiritual, his kingdom is spiritual, his light is spiritual, his life is spiritual, his day-star is spiritual; and his day dawneth, and his day-star ariseth in the heart.

Thus *the day-spring from on high did visit us, who sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death.* And here we have met with what the apostles met with, the very same light of life, the very same enlightening Spirit and power,

and have been enlightened by it, and tasted of the same gift.

The very same grace that appeared to them, and taught them, hath appeared to us, and taught us; and of it we have learned the same lessons, in the same covenant of life wherein they learned; and now can we seal to their testimony in the same Spirit wherein they gave it forth, and witness to the same eternal life, and the same holy oil and anointing, our eyes having been opened and kept open by it. And though there be great disputes about our testimony in this our day (and the present professors rise up against *us*, as the former professors did against *them*); yet let but any man come rightly to distinguish in himself between that which God begets in the heart, and all other births, and let that speak and judge in them,—that will soon confess that our testimony is of God, and given forth in the authority and by the commission of his own Spirit. True wisdom is justified by the children that are born of her; it is the other birth that doth not, nor can, own her. The other birth can own former dispensations (according to the letter of them); but not the life and power of the present.

I have known the breaking down of much in me by the powerful hand of the Lord, and a parting with much (though not too much) for Christ's sake. The Lord hath brought the day of distress and inward judgment over my heart; he hath arisen to shake terribly the earthly part in me (yea, what if I should say that the powers of heaven have been shaken also), that he might make me capable to receive, and bring me into, that kingdom which cannot be shaken. And now that which God hath shaken, and removed in me, I see others build upon, and they think it shall never be shaken in them; but such know not the day of the Lord, nor the terrible searching of his pure light, nor the operation of his power, which will not spare in one, what he hath reproved, condemned, shaken, and overturned in another. He that knows the living stone within, and comes to him as to a living stone, and is built upon the revelation of his Spirit, life, and power (revealed inwardly against the power of darkness), is not deceived. All that

otherwise build (I mean upon an outward knowledge concerning Christ, and not upon his inward life), their building will not be able to stand in the day of the Lord. I wish they might have a sense of it in time, that they might not perish for ever; but experience that life and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, which redeemeth and preserveth out of the perishing state for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE

ANCIENT

PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH:

OR

THE LIGHT WITHIN ASSERTED;

AND

HELD FORTH ACCORDING TO TRUE EXPERIENCE, AND THE FAITHFUL TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES:

IN THE ANSWERS TO FOUR QUESTIONS.

I. What this Light is which we testify of, and what is the nature of it?
II. What it doth inwardly in the heart?
III. How it cometh to be lighted, set up, and increased there?
IV. How it cometh to be diminished or extinguished in any?

ALSO

AN APPEAL

TO

THE WITNESS OF GOD IN ALL CONSCIENCES,

WHICH IS THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES WITHOUT, OR THE VOICE AND TESTIMONY OF THE LIGHT AND SPIRIT OF GOD WITHIN, IN THE HEART?

By one once greatly distressed, but now at length, in the tender mercy of the Lord, effectually visited and redeemed by the Light and Power of Truth,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

PREFACE.

THE true ministers of the gospel, the ministers of the new covenant, were ordained and appointed by God to be ministers of light, ministers of righteousness, ministers of the Spirit. Matt. v. 14. 2 Cor. xi. 15. chap. iii. 6. And this was their work and service, even to preach the light, to deliver their message concerning the light, which they heard of Christ, and were sent by him to preach, as is recorded 1 John i. 5. So that they were to tell men what the light was, and where it was to be found; and to turn men from darkness to light, from sin and unrighteousness to purity and righteouness, from the spirit and power of Satan to the Spirit and power of the living God, (Dan. xii. 3. Acts xxvi. 18.) that so they might come from under Satan's authority, power, and kingdom of darkness, into the light, wherein Christ reigns as King, Priest, and Prophet, unto and over all his; who is faithful in all his house, and Son and Lord of all, distributing life, righteousness, mercy, and peace to his whole family, as they abide in him, and walk in subjection to his Spirit. So that there is no condemnation to them that are gathered unto Christ, ingrafted into him, and who abide in him (walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit) who is the quickener, guide, and rule of all the children of the new covenant. For Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, in and to them all, and is made by God all in all unto them. He is their Shepherd, their King, their Captain, their vine, their olive-tree, their leader, their door, their path, their rule, their righteousness, their holiness, their wisdom, their redemption, their altar, their sacrifice, their priest, their prophet, their sabbath, their light, their day-spring, their bright and morning-star, their sun, their shield, their rock, and their high tower.

What shall I say? God hath gathered together all things into One, even in him, whose Spirit, life, and light eternal is the One substance, which answers all the figures and shadows of the law, and they are all comprehended, and fulfilled, and end in him. So that he is the end of the law for righteousness, to all that believe in him. And he ministers righteousness, he ministers truth, he ministers life, he ministers salvation, he ministers power, he ministers pure, heavenly wisdom; and no good thing will he withhold from them that come unto him in the drawings of his Father, and follow him whithersoever he leads, and obey his gospel, which is everlastingly new and living.

Now, this precious ministry hath been withdrawn, and hid from ages and generations, in the long night of the great apostasy and thick darkness. And how could it be otherwise? For men being in the dark, and having erred from the true Spirit, and let in a wrong spirit, and built up wrong churches; and having not known the true wilderness (nor being willing to flee into it) whither the true church fled, and was nourished by God with the true food, even with the true, living virtue and nourishment, all this dark night of the apostasy,—I say, how could they come at the true light, the true Spirit, the true power (from which the true ministry is), which did not visibly now appear, but was with the true church in the wilderness? So that there hath been a true church all this while, which the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against, as to her inward temple and altar (nor over the worshippers which have worshipped therein), although they have gained the outward court; God having severed it from his inward building, and given it to the Gentiles in spirit; who are not true Jews, who are not worshippers in the Spirit, and in the truth. Rev. xxi. 1, 2.

But now, at length, blessed be the Lord, the long night of darkness draws towards an end; yea, is come to an end in many spirits; and the true light is broken forth again (and shineth again inwardly in many), and the true ministry is revived again, and the everlasting gospel (the ever-

lasting covenant of life, mercy, and salvation, in and through Christ Jesus, the light and life of men) preached again. For now it is not only outwardly read, that "God is light;" but the message hath been received, and persons chosen, and sent forth by God to publish it; and to turn men from darkness to light, and from Satan's power to God. And, blessed be the Lord, the publishing of this precious testimony (in the power and authority of the Most High) hath not been in vain. But the captivity of many hath been broken by the power of light, and the power and strength of darkness (inwardly) overturned by it. Oh, how hath the strong man, which kept the house, before the stronger than he appeared in the name and authority of his Father,—I say, how hath he trembled at the inward and spiritual appearance of him that was stronger than he! And how have the pillars of the old building been shaken! How hath the witness of God been reached to in men's spirits! How have the dead been raised, the blind eye opened, the deaf ear unstopped, the dumb tongue loosed, the lame caused to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, the inward, spiritual leprosy cleansed, and done away for ever, the wounded healed, the broken-hearted bound up! And what hath not the Lord done inwardly and spiritually for his people, who have been sensible of his appearance, and gathered by his Spirit and power to the true Shiloh, who is the true Shepherd, the land of the living, the holy city and temple, the light of the city, the life of the city, the gates and wall of the city, the king and kingdom both! For his life, his nature, his Spirit is all, and in all. Ah! what do we desire to have, but Christ the seed, and this seed sown in our hearts and abiding in us, and his life, righteousness and glory, his holy power, dominion, and kingdom springing up in it? And as, in the apostles' days there was the seal to their testimony in people's hearts, where their ministry was ordered by the Lord, and was received; even so it is now. Oh, how doth the witness answer in men's hearts and consciences! And they that keep to the witness, and its testimony, not hearkening after words

to the wisdom of the flesh; how do they become living epistles, to be seen and read of all men, as the Lord pleaseth to open that eye in any, which can see and read.

Now, to be often testifying of this light (which the Lord hath visited us with, and wherein we experience the knowledge of his Son, and redemption by him), to us it is not grievous; and it is good and safe for others. Therefore, it arising in my heart, in the springings of life, and lying upon me (as in the sight of the Lord) to give forth this further short testimony, for the sakes of such as have any desire to know and experience the truth, as it is in Jesus; I am given up in spirit to serve my God therein; and do give it forth in humility, in fear, in tenderness of spirit, in true love, with breathings to my God, that he would please to open the hearts of those that shall be inclined to read it, that they may feel somewhat of that in themselves, from which the testimony came; and so therefrom may hear, in true sense and understanding, the true and good report of the sound of life and salvation in this our age, and may learn so to turn inwardly from the darkness to the light, from the power of Satan to God's Spirit and appearance inwardly, that the arm of the Lord may be revealed in them, and powerfully stretched out for them.

And this is the precious knowledge of Christ indeed, even to know Christ the power of God, Christ the wisdom of God, inwardly revealed and working in the heart, destroying sin there, and building up the holy building, where he himself will dwell and reign. Oh that all that truly breathe after him, might not be withheld from him (and his living testimony, and inward appearance) by the power of darkness and deceit, which works subtly in the heart against the appearance, power, and work of the Lord there, but might thus come to know him! Amen.

THE

ANCIENT PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH, &C.

QUESTION I.

WHAT is this light which we so earnestly testify of, and whereof we affirm, That all men are, or have been, in some measure, enlightened by it? And what is the nature of it?

ANSWER.

It is that which shineth from God in the heart, wherein God is near to men; and wherein and whereby men may seek after God, and find him.

God is a spirit; and his Spirit and presence is near to all men. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Psal. cxxxix. 7. &c. It is impossible for any so to do. For God, who is a Spirit (and the Father of spirits), is nigh to every spirit. Every spirit depends upon him, the fountain of spirits; and hath its being, life, and motion from him, and in him, after a sense; though not after such a sense, as they who are quickened by him experience.

Now God, who is light, being so near every man, doth he never shine upon them? They are darkness; but doth he never appear in the darkness? He who is light, loveth mankind; doth he never visit them with his love? He knoweth what and how great inward and spiritual enemies mankind have; doth he never make any discoveries of their enemies to them? Yes; the light is near all mankind, to discover to them, and help them against the darkness; and the love is near to help them against the enmity which destroyeth, and so to save them. For whosoever joineth to the light of God's Spirit, cannot but witness salvation thereby; for it is of a saving nature, and bringeth salvation with it to all that

receive it. Christ is in it, and is known by it (inwardly, spiritually, livingly known), and he is not, nor can be, known without it. He that knoweth the light of God's Spirit knoweth Christ; and he that believeth in it believeth in him; and he that knoweth not, nor believeth therein, neither knoweth nor believeth in Christ. So that as the Jews' circumcision outward, and their knowledge and thinking to be justified by the righteousness and works of the law (which most of them brake, and were transgressors of; though Paul said, he was, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless"),—I say, as this was disowned, and denied by Christ and his apostles; and the circumcision, and work of God on the hearts of the Gentiles set over it, and exalted above it, as Rom. ii. so is it now also. The knowledge of those, and belief of those, who own the light, and believe in the light, is owned by God's Spirit (in this our day (for the true believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for that knowledge which is life eternal; and the knowing and believing on him, as men account it, according to their apprehensions of the letter, without this, is reckoned with God for ignorance and unbelief.

So that in this is God known, in this is Christ believed in. Here God draws nigh to every man, and is a God not afar off, but nigh at hand; and his salvation is nigh, and his righteousness ready to be revealed here; and here every man may seek after and obtain the knowledge of him, the saving knowledge, the knowledge of the grace, of the gift of grace which brings salvation. In this is the Son kissed, in this is he drawn nigh to, and come to by the soul, and not out of it. Here are the drawings of the Father felt. Let any man feel this, he feels that which begets to God; he feels that which comes from the Son, is of the nature of the Son, wherein the Father draws the heart of the child whom he begets, to the Son. And in this as the soul comes, it comes out of the darkness wherein Christ is not nor dwells, into the light wherein Christ is with the Father; and so in this the soul is ever near, and out of it still afar off. In this is the holy root witnessed, and the ingrafting

thereinto; out of this the holy root is not known, nor can men understand what it is to be ingrafted into him, and how he is an Olive-tree, a Vine, a Door, a Shepherd, a Leader, a Captain, a Redeemer. Nor can men possibly know the voice of the true Shepherd from the voice of a stranger, till they come hither; nor how the true Shepherd walks before his sheep, and what it is to follow him out of that which destroys, into that which regenerates, makes new and living, till they come hither.

Now this inward light is abundantly testified of in the Scriptures.

As first by Moses, who speaking of the other covenant, the new covenant, the covenant of circumcising the heart, turneth or directeth the mind to this word or commandment nigh, whereby alone it can be done, as Deut. xxx. And this was the reason why God so often commanded the Jews to circumcise their hearts, and to wash them and make them clean from their wicked ways and vain thoughts; because Moses had directed their minds to that, and that was near to them, wherein and whereby it might be done. In another place, he bids them make them a new heart. Ezek. xviii. 31. How could that be done? Why, by turning to God's Spirit which strove with them, his power would effect it in them; and men are said to purify their hearts, through the Spirit, in loving and obeying the truth which doth it. 1 Peter i. 22. John xvii. 17.

Secondly, By Job, who speaks of God's candle shining upon his head, and of walking through darkness by his light, chap. xxix. 30. He speaks likewise of those that rebel against the light, that know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof, chap. xxiv. 13.

Thirdly, By David, who by it saw through the types and shadows to the substance, and grew wiser than his teachers, he knowing the word within, and having his candle lighted by it, so that he knew the inward law which converts the soul, and was led by God's light and truth shining in his inward parts. Psal. xliii. 3.

Fourthly, By Solomon, "The commandment is a lamp,

and the law light, and the reproofs of instruction the way of life." Prov. vi. 23. Every one that experienceth the light, the law, the commandment within, knoweth it to be thus. Again, saith he, "The path of the just is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," chap. iv. 18. Just as a light, which shines outwardly, is to the outward man; such is the inward light to the inward man; yea more: for inwardly the light and the way is all one. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, which are three names of one and the same thing. And he that walks in the light, walks in the way of life and holiness; which he that walks in the darkness walks out of. I shall mention but one place more, which is very differently rendered, it is chap. xx. 27. The new translation renders it thus: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." The old thus, "The light of the Lord is the breath of man, and searcheth all the bowels of the belly." The heart of man (the unregenerate mind, the unregenerate spirit) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; that whereby God searcheth it, is his light, his candle, his own Holy Spirit.

Fifthly, By the prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremy, Ezekiel, Micah, &c. who said, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy; and to humble thyself to walk with thy God?" chap. vi. 8. How doth God show this to mankind, but by the inward light of his Spirit?

Sixthly, By John Baptist, who was the forerunner, and testified of Christ as of the inward and spiritual baptizer, who had his fan in his hand. What is that? What doth Christ fan with? What doth he fan, and with what? The light within is a fan, the Spirit within is a spirit of judgment and burning; it scatters the darkness; yea, it consumes and burns up the dross and stubble there.

Seventhly, By Christ himself, who said, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John iii. 19. Mark how Christ preached the light

(the seed, the kingdom, the leaven), and bid men bring their deeds to it, and blamed them that did not, ver. 20, 21. How can there be an inward Jew, an inward circumcision, without an inward law, inward light, and inward testimony? And to this inward law and testimony, must the inward Jew daily have recourse, and bring his deeds thither, to be judged and scanned there.

Again, Christ saith, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," chap. viii. 12. How is Christ the light of the world? Or how was Christ the light of the world? Was he only so, as he appeared in that body of flesh? Is he not so in his inward and spiritual appearance? Is he not the universal light, the Sun of righteousness, which enlighteneth the whole dark world? Yet again he saith: "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light," chap. xii. 35, 36. This is Christ's direction to men how they may become true believers; to wit, by believing in the light. The light shines in the darkness ("ye were darkness"), and by believing in it, men become children of it.

Eighthly, By the apostles and evangelists. They were sent to turn men from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18. and they testified of the light they were to turn men to; delivered their message that God was light, and that in him was no darkness at all. They preached Christ, the light, the life, the way, the truth: they turned men from Satan's spirit, which is darkness, to God's Spirit, which is light.

John the evangelist testified of "the Word which was in the beginning," and said, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not," chap. i. 4, 5. And again saith, speaking of him, "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," ver. 9.

Paul saith, "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

Ephes. v. 3. Wherefore "awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead," ver. 14. for God hath sent forth the light of his Son to rouse thee. Again, he professedly averreth, that the Word nigh in the mouth and heart was that Word of faith which he preached. Rom. x. 8. If so, then that is the Word of faith which is to be believed in, if men would believe in Christ, and be saved by him.

James speaketh of God as the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift proceedeth, chap. i. 17. Then surely from him is the grace, and the gift (the free gift) by grace, which is upon all to justification of life, that receive it, and follow the teachings of it.

Peter speaks of the more sure word of prophecy, to which men should take heed; and wait (in taking heed to that) for the dawning of the day, and the arising of the day-star in the heart. 2 Peter i. 19. Indeed all men ought to wait for, and give heed to, the light of God's Holy Spirit, and the holy prophecies, warnings, and directions thereof in their hearts.

And John, at last, as I may say, in that book of the Revelation (closing up the testimony of that age and generation) speaks of walking in the light of the Lamb, chap. xxi. 23, 24. (which every one that comes to witness the true light ought to do, else there is no true fellowship with God, nor with his sanctified ones, who are gathered into and walk in the light, even as God is in the light. 1 John i. 7.) And the angel that opened the prophecies and mysteries of that book to John, said, that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy," chap. xix. 10. So then, he that hath this Spirit of prophecy, he that hath this inward light, hath the testimony of Jesus; but he that hath it not, hath not the testimony itself, but only words concerning the testimony. For this is the distinction between the true believer and the false: the true believer hath the spirit of prophecy, the witness in himself, 1 John v. 10. the false believer hath but the outward testimony or relation of things; but not the inward substance, the covenant and law of life within.

QUESTION II.

What doth this light do inwardly in the hearts of those that receive it, believe in it, and give up to it?

ANSWER.

It doth all that is requisite to be done, from the soul's coming out of spiritual Egypt into the land of rest; and all that is needful for its growth and preservation there.

First, It enlighteneth. It showeth what is evil, and also what is good, according to the measure and proportion of it, and according to God's causing it to shine in the heart. It discovers the mystery of darkness, the mystery of ungodliness, the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of deceit in all its mysterious workings; for nothing is hid from the light of him with whom we have to do. And it also discovers the mystery of godliness, the mystery of holiness, the pure way and commandment of life; and gives all the believers (the true believers in Christ) this experience, that "his commandment is life everlasting." There is nothing the heart needs desire to know of God, but this makes it manifest in the due season. It opens the very mystery of the Scriptures, gives the right understanding and application of the promises, and fulfils the prophecies thereof in the heart.

Secondly, It doth not only manifest the good and evil, but likewise inclines the mind to choose the good, and refuse the evil. It draws from the evil, and towards the good; yea, and the soul is made willing in the day of him who is light, and who appears in the light, and reveals his power there. There is a way, a high-way, spoken of, Isa. xxxv. 8. called the way of holiness, which the unclean can neither discern nor pass over to; but the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, the measure of grace and truth wherewith he enlightens men, so manifests and leads into this way, that they that are taught and guided by him, shall walk therein, and not err.

Thirdly, It scatters the darkness, breaks the power of the enemy; it makes one with him who is all power, and giveth to partake thereof; so that power is given to become sons in the light, to the children of the light; power given to become kings and priests to God; power given to reign in the dominion of his life, in the dominion of his truth, over sin, over death, over deceit; and to offer up the holy, living sacrifices to God.

What shall I say? It is one with Christ, it is of his heavenly Spirit and nature, it makes way for him, it leads to him, it fills with him, it brings into unity and fellowship both with the Father and the Son, where the peace which passeth understanding, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory, abounds. This is the gospel message, that God is light; and they that are gathered into and abide in this light, they are gathered into and abide in unity and fellowship, both with the Father and the Son.

David had great sense and great experience of this light of God's Holy Spirit, and of his truth sent forth, manifested, and revealed in his inward parts, as is signified, Psa. li. 6. and again, in that vehement prayer of his: Psa. xliii. 3. "Oh! send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God the gladness of my joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God." Indeed when the light shines, and the truth springs up in the heart, it leads to him that is true, it leads to the holy hill and mountain of the Lord, and to the inward altar; which they have no right to, who serve and worship at the outward; and the harp is known whereon the Most High is praised, even that inward harp, whereof David's outward harp was but the figure. Therefore they that come to the holy hill of God, to the mountain of the Lord's house, and to that holy building which was reared there, they invite and encourage others to walk in that light which led them thither, wherein communion with God, and one with another, and the blessings of life and peace are enjoyed. Isa. ii. 5.

But what should I speak of the sufficiency of the light and grace of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of what it is able to do, and of what he is pleased to work by it? I shall only say this, that as the fulness was enough for Christ, and to fit him for the work which he had to do; so the measure of grace and truth which he bestows, is enough for every man. "My grace is sufficient for thee," said God to Paul, and so it is for every man. There is no want of sufficiency in the grace of God, in the seed of the kingdom, in the pearl of price, in the holy leaven, in the heavenly salt; but the virtue and strength of it is greater than the enemy is able to withstand; and he that keeps to it, and departs not from it, shall feel life and power springing up in it, to quicken him, and carry him through all that God requires of him. For the water which Christ gives is a well, springing up (in him to whom it is given) unto life eternal; and this water is able to wash, able to nourish, able to fill the soul with living virtue, which waiteth for it and partaketh of it. And all the nations of them that are saved, are to walk in the light of God's Spirit. To this men are to be turned, unto this they are to be gathered, into this they are to be translated (even from the kingdom of darkness, into the Son's marvellous light): and being changed by it (into its nature) become light in the Lord, and ought to walk in the light, as God is in the light. 1 John i. 7.

QUESTION III.

How doth the mind come to be enlightened, and the candle of the Lord come to be set up in the soul?

ANSWER.

By God's causing it to shine there, and the mind's being turned to it, and given up to be exercised by it, as it pleaseth the Lord to cause it to shine.

The power of the Lord reacheth to the pure principle of life and light in the heart, in the seasons of his good plea-

ure. This being reached to and touched by the Lord, answers his touch, his visit, his call; and the mind being turned to it, sensible of it, and willing to let it into its nature and spirit, and to become one with it (suffering with it, and bearing its cross); the seed cometh to grow there, the light which was hid and overwhelmed under the earth (under the earthly wisdom, the earthly will, the earthly knowledge, the earthly desires, the earthly delights, &c.) cometh to be lighted up there; yea, the life cometh to be quickened more and more, and the holy leaven to spread more and more there. And this sensible plant of God's renown being thus entertained, and being not afterwards grieved, despised, quenched, or hurt, by the giving way to, and letting in of that which is contrary to it, it shooteth up into a kingdom of righteousness, into a tree of righteousness, within the compass whereof, and under the shadow whereof, the soul sitteth down in peace and rest, and is defended and nourished with that which is pure and living, and full of the pure sap and virtue, and so becomes strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, against the power and strength of darkness. Now, this all men may experience (at first in some low measure and degree, and afterwards more and more) as they come to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it. For then it will be working against, and purging out, that which is of a contrary nature, and overspreading the heart with its own nature; insomuch as that which was the least will become the greatest; and that which was the lowest of all (and indeed trampled under foot) will rise up into dominion and power over all, and bring all under. So that the lofty city, the lofty building of fleshly wisdom, and of sin and iniquity in the heart, will be laid low, and the feet of the seed shall tread it down; even the feet of that which was once poor and needy, until it was anointed, and its horn exalted by the Lord.

QUESTION IV.

How is the light or candle of the Lord diminished, and at length extinguished or put out in some? Or how cometh that about?

ANSWER.

By their neglecting, despising, quenching it; hearkening and giving way to the contrary spirit in its motions and temptations. For as the good let in, stops and works out the evil; so the evil let in, stops and works out the good: so the Philistine nature given way to, stops the inward well which Jacob had digged and opened. There is a time when life is a mystery, a fountain sealed; and there is a time wherein God unseals the fountain, and opens the mystery in the heart. Oh! then great care is to be had, and the soul is to lie very low in the pure fear, that it may continue in his goodness, and walk worthy of his love, that the fountain may be kept open, and the pure springs of the holy land flow, and not be sealed and shut up again. For there are some that rebel against the light, and they dwell in a dry land. There were some that did always resist and vex God's Spirit, and the Lord's Spirit ceased striving with them, and gave them up to a reprobate sense and judgment concerning the things of God. There are some that do not improve God's good talent, and from them that which was once given is again taken away. Yea, the candle of the wicked shall one time or other be put out, and they shall be silent in darkness, and their mouth stopped from having any thing to say against God, his truth and people for evermore. And all men had need to take heed how they be wanton with the grace of God, or despise the day of their visitation by the holy light of God's Spirit; for if God take away the talent, if God put out the inward candle, who can light it again? Oh! how did poor David, the man after God's

own heart, suffer by letting the enemy's temptations in upon him! "Cast me not away from thy presence," said he, "and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Indeed he did lose his condition at the present, and he speaks as a man in danger of being quite undone; though afterwards he came to comfort and assurance that God would restore to him the joy of his salvation, and light his candle, and enlighten his darkness again.

But I am not insensible of what doubts and disputes there are in men's minds about this testimony which we give (from certain knowledge and true experience) concerning the light wherewith God enlighteneth souls. At first, when the testimony first came forth, men would not grant such a thing as a light from God in men, which convinced of and reproved for sin; but now there are many will assent to that, who yet cannot believe it to be a measure of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, and that in it the sufficiency and power of God is revealed, against the strength and power of Satan. But let such seriously consider,

First, Who they are that have testified, and testify of this light. They are persons who generally have been deeply exercised in religion: persons who have read the Scriptures very diligently, with much praying and waiting upon God, for the true, certain, and clear understanding of them: persons who (several of them) have had experience of most (if not all other) separated ways, but could never meet with the answer of the cry of their souls, nor with satisfaction to that birth which breathed in them after the Lord night and day.

Secondly, What their testimony is; which is manifold. At first, that they were by the Lord (even by his Holy [illegible] and the shinings and springings of his precious seed [illegible]rned to this light, and shown it to be of God.

That in turning to it, they still meet with the [illegible]pearance, and power of the Lord working in [illegible]. Thirdly, That it did not only discover sin to also powerfully resist it, fight against it, and

bring it under; which no light and power besides the light and power of God's Spirit can do. Fourthly, That the life of the Son is manifested and revealed in it, and they come therein truly to see, and taste, and handle the Word of eternal life. Fifthly, That in this light they come to witness cleansing by the blood of the Lamb, and the everlasting covenant made with them (even the sure mercies of David), and the holy, precious promises fulfilled in them, whereby they are made partakers of the divine nature, and come to witness an entrance into the holy city, and drink of the streams of the pure crystal river, which refresh and make glad the city of our God, and all the tabernacles wherein he dwells. Lastly, to mention no more, The Lord hath shown them how this had been formerly with them, even in the days of their former profession; and how God had wrought by this in them in former times, though they then knew it not; and that all their ability then to understand any thing of God aright, or to pray unto him, or reap any true benefit from the Scriptures, was through the stirring of this in them, whereby God even then, in some measure, enlightened and quickened their minds. For there being such a principle in man, it works variously, and many times when he is not aware of it: and he hath benefit thereby, if he resist it not, but receive its influence and operation, though he hath not the distinct knowledge and discerning of it.

Thirdly, Again consider whether the light of Christ's Spirit, or the grace and truth which is come by Jesus Christ, hath not this property of discovering, convincing, and reproving for sin. Doubtless the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the lowest ministration of it, is of that nature, that it discovereth and fighteth against the law of sin and death, wherever it finds it. And whether the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of truth, who leads out of all error and falsehood, and into all truth, is not as well to be known by this, even by his convincing the world of sin, and inwardly reproving for sin, as by his comforting of the saints, in their holy travels out of sin, and battles against sin.

Consider, Fourthly, whether any thing can convince of

sin but the light of God's Holy Spirit shining in the heart? There may be an outward declaration of sin by the law outward; but it never reacheth the heart and conscience but by the shining of the light inward. Nay, it cannot so much as reach to the understanding, but as God opens the heart, and brings home the conviction by his light and power. This we have experience of in the Jews; who though the prophets came with certain evidence and demonstration from God's Spirit, yet they were not convinced thereby, but stood it out against the prophets, and justified themselves against the voice and Word of the Lord; their eyes being closed, their ears shut, and hearts hardened against that of God in them, as may be read in Jeremiah, chap. ii. and divers other places, even to admiration. And what wickedness is so great which the hardened man will not plead for, and be defending and justifying himself in! Yea, if God do open men's understandings in some measure, so that they cannot but confess such and such things to be evil in general (as pride, covetousness, drunkenness, riotousness, excess in apparel, lying, swearing, &c.), yet they are not able to see the evil and danger of these things in and to themselves, but have covers and excuses to hide them, unless the inward light and Spirit of the Lord search their hearts, and make them manifest to them.

Fifthly, Consider the weight and proper tendency of these two scriptures, and do not form another meaning, and so put off the drift and intent of God's Holy Spirit in them. The first is that of the apostle. Ephes. v. 13, 14. "But all things that are reproved, are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest," &c. Every man is bid to awake, because every man hath some proportion of that in him which (if hearkened to) will reprove, rouse up, and awaken him, and lead him from among the dead, to him who gives the light, and causeth it to shine in him, even in the midst of his darkness and corruption, that it might awaken him out of it. The other scripture is that of Gal. v. 27. where the apostle speaks of the flesh lusting against

the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. Did not God's Spirit strive with the old world; not only with the sons of God, who had corrupted themselves, but with the rest also? And what is it that hath striven with wicked men since, and that doth strive with wicked men still? Is it not the same good Spirit? What is it also that inwardly resists and lusts against the will and strivings of God's Spirit? Is it not the flesh? So here are the two seeds, the two principles (which are contrary one to the other) near man. For there is the creature man (which of right is the Lord's), into whom the destroyer hath gained entrance, and in whom he rules by the law of sin and death. Now he who made man, seeketh after him, and findeth out his enemy in man, and giveth forth a law against him inwardly in the heart; which, so far as any man gives ear to, believes, and receives, there ariseth presently a fight and striving between these two contrary principles in him, so that this man cannot do the things that he would. Now that which thus strives against sin in any man, and troubles him because of sin, reproving and condemning him for it, that is of another nature than the flesh (which harbors sin), and contrary to it.

Lastly, Consider the great love of God to mankind, and the great care he hath of them. First, as touching their bodies; how doth he provide for the bodies of all mankind! He would have none hurt, none destroyed; but feedeth all, nourisheth all, making plentiful provision, and giving fruitful seasons; causing his sun to shine, and his rain to descend on all. Then as to their souls, he knoweth the preciousness thereof, and what the loss of a soul is; yea, he knoweth how eager the devourer is to destroy, and setteth himself against him. He is the Father of spirits, and his Son the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, whose nature it is to gather and save; and it is said expressly of God, by the testimony of the Spirit of truth, that he would have all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. And whereas it was said to the Jews, that God was as the potter, and they as the clay, and he could make them vessels either

of honor or dishonor at his pleasure, Jer. xviii. 6. yet it was to this end, even to invite and encourage them to be subject to him, that they might be made vessels of honor by him, as appears ver. 11.

Now consider, if God be as tender of souls as of the bodies of men, doth he not make provision for the soul as well as for the body? Would he not have the soul live, and would he not have the soul fed as well as the body? If so, then needs must the light of his Holy Spirit shine inwardly throughout all nations, and the saving grace and power be manifest everywhere, even in every heart, in some measure, and the flesh and blood of the Son of God (which is the soul's food) be distributed to all. And truly, the Lord is not a hard master to any, as the unprofitable servant, in every dispensation, is ready to account of him; for the times of ignorance and darkness God winketh at, or passeth over, being very tender towards men in that estate; yea, a little that is of him turned to and heeded, according to the measure of understanding that God gives, will be owned and accepted, even in the midst of a great deal of darkness and evil working against it.

There was a time before the law (for the law was given by Moses): what saved then? Was it any thing but the saving grace, the saving light, the saving Spirit, the holy anointing, could any be saved but thereby?

What saved under the law? Did the shadows then save, or the substance of life veiled under them? Did not the Spirit then work inwardly, redeem inwardly, save inwardly? Did not the word or commandment nigh in the mouth and heart (to which Moses, by God's direction, had turned their minds) enlighten and save inwardly?

And any of the Gentiles, as the Word or Spirit of life did work in them, did it not circumcise inwardly, and save them also? So that though they had not the law or ministration of Moses outward, yet they had the inward writing from God on their hearts, and showed the work and efficacy of it there, and shall at last be justified by, and according to, the everlasting gospel, which justifieth all whatso-

ever, so far as in any measure they receive and are subject to the light and law of God's pure Spirit, which the carnal mind cannot receive, nor be subject to.

Oh that men could die to themselves, even to their own wisdom and prudence, and not lean to their own understandings, nor idolize their own apprehensions and conceivings, but wait to receive understanding from God, who giveth liberally of the true wisdom to those that ask and wait aright! And how doth God give true wisdom and understanding? Is it not by the shining of his light in the heart? Oh that men were turned inwardly thither, and inwardly dead to that wisdom and prudence from which God ever hid things, and ever will! He that will be truly wise, must first become a fool, that he may be wise; that is, he must not strive to learn in the comprehensive way of man's wisdom and prudence the things of God's kingdom; but feel the begettings of life in his heart, and in that receive somewhat of the new and heavenly understanding, and so die to the other, and know no more the things of God after the flesh; that is, as a wise man, as a learned scribe, as a great disputant (for where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Can they find out the mystery of life, the mystery of God's kingdom in this age, any more than they could in former ages?), but become a babe, a fool, and so receive and bow to that which his own wisdom will call foolishness, and account weakness; but the other birth, which is begotten and born of God, will know, and daily experience, to be the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.

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of Isaiah the son of Amos." Isa. i. 1.
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on his bed. Dan. vii. 1. And Jeremiah

AN

APPEAL

TO THE WITNESS OF GOD IN ALL CONSCIENCES, WHICH IS THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES WITHOUT, OR THE VOICE AND TESTIMONY OF THE LIGHT AND SPIRIT OF GOD WITHIN, IN THE HEART?

THE apostle Peter speaks of a more sure word of prophecy (or a more sure prophetical word, as the Greek hath it) than that voice which came from heaven, which they heard when they were with Christ in the holy mount. 2 Pet. i. 18, 19. Now, what this more sure word is, which ought to be given heed to in the most especial manner, more than to such an eminent voice and testimony from heaven, even from the excellent glory, is a very great and weighty question. Now, some affirm, that it is the word and testimony of the Scriptures without; others affirm, that it is the voice, sound, and testimony of the Word of Life within.

I do not know a scripture that my heart hath been more tenderly solicitous about, desiring to give due honor both to the Spirit of God, and to the holy Scriptures, and also to understand what the Lord would have me in the most especial manner give heed to, until the season came from him, in which he should cause the day to dawn, and the day-star to arise in my heart. And now, that others might come to the same understanding and satisfaction also, are these following considerations proposed in the weight of my spirit to them.

First, Consider how sure the word of prophecy was, how sure the voice and testimony from heaven was; than which, the apostle directs them to somewhat as more sure. This I may clearly say of it, it was undoubtedly from God, and

that in a very extraordinary manner, even in Christ's presence, when Moses and Elias were with him, and God bestowing upon him honor and glory, transfiguring him before his disciples, causing his face to shine as the sun, and making his raiment white as the light. Matt. xvii. 2. And the intent of it was to give the disciples full evidence and satisfaction (for the voice was not for his sake, but for theirs), or rather that they might have a full ground, after his death and resurrection, to testify for the satisfaction and confirmation of others; for till then they were to keep it secret, ver. 9. Now that which was provided for this end, doubtless was very sure, and testified by them who were chosen to be faithful witnesses in this respect.

Secondly, Consider whether the testimony of the prophets concerning Christ was surer than the immediate voice from God himself? Were they surer to those that lived in those days, or to those that should come after, than this testimony was to the apostles, and to those that did communicate it in the will and counsel of the Lord? The prophets did testify from God's holy, unerring Spirit; but they that lived in those days did not always believe and receive their prophecies, but sometimes doubted of them and questioned them; yea, their prophecies were not always evident, and clearly understood by those who desired to understand; but their visions were many times a book sealed, both to the learned and unlearned. But this testimony, this word of prophecy, this voice from the excellent glory ("This is my beloved Son, hear him"), is a very plain, evident, full testimony, easy to be understood by any in that present, or in after ages. And I must confess, as to myself, the reading of it did always deeply affect and satisfy my heart.

Thirdly, Consider the manner of God's appearing to the prophets, and compare it with the manner of this appearance. God appeared to them sometimes in visions, sometimes in dreams. Moses saw a bush burning, and heard a voice. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos." Isa. i. 1. And Ezekiel saw visions, chap. i. 1. And Daniel had a dream and visions on his bed. Dan. vii. 1. And Jeremiah

had that sweet prophecy (of God's satiating the weary soul, and replenishing every sorrowful soul) in his sleep. Jer. xxxi. 26. Now here to these blessed apostles was a vision given of the glory of Christ, and of Moses and Elias with him; not in the mind or head, as Daniel's visions were, Dan. vii. 1. but the excellent glory did appear, and Christ, Moses, and Elias were really there together on the mount (which is more than a prophetic vision of a thing), and Christ was clothed with and swallowed up in the glory. For God, the Father, did set himself to honor and glorify him, so as never man was glorified before; and the voice came (the certain voice; what voice could be more certain?) from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 2 Pet. i. 17. And this pure vision of glory (even of God's thus appearing, and Christ's thus transfiguring) they saw, and heard the voice which came from heaven, when they were with him in the holy mount. Now were the prophecies of the prophets that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, and that he should be thus and thus, &c., equal to this in evidence and demonstration? Why was John greater than the rest of the prophets? Was it not in that he was chosen to be the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way, and could point with his finger to the Messiah? And yet, is not this immediate testimony from the excellent glory greater than the testimony of John?

Fourthly, Consider whether Christ's own words in the flesh to his disciples were surer than the voice from the excellent glory. If I should extol the words of Christ in the flesh above the words of the prophets which testified of him, should I therein do the words and testimonies of the prophets any wrong? He was the Son; he had the fulness of life, the fulness of the Spirit, the great authority and virtue of God, his Father. "God" saith the apostle, "who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. i. 1, 2. seeming to exalt and magnify God's speaking by his Son, and the way of this ministration above the ministration of the prophets (which ministration

was first by him in the flesh, afterwards in Spirit, which is properly called the ministration of the Spirit. 2 Cor. iii. 8.) Now consider whether this sure word of prophecy from the excellent glory, so immediately from the majesty on high, was not intended by him as a seal to the faith of the disciples, as a seal to Christ's appearance in the flesh, and to what he had taught them (which was sometimes in parables, and not so fully understood by them); and whether this was not more bright, more ravishing, more certain, more establishing, than his common presence and appearance among them, and than the words which he from the Father, not the Father so immediately himself, spake to them? For that which is given to confirm a thing, is (in order of nature, and for evidence' sake) more certain and clear than that which it is given to confirm.

Fifthly, Consider whether the voice of God's Spirit and light within in the heart be not more clear and certain to him that hears it, than any word or testimony from without? Is it not a surer word of prophecy than this relation or testimony of the apostles, of what they heard from the excellent glory? Yea, is it not surer than any testimony of the Scriptures, or than all outward testimonies put together?

Sixthly, Consider whether they who are turned from darkness to the light, even to the inward manifestation of God's Holy Spirit, ought not to give diligent heed unto it, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in their hearts?

Lastly, Consider, what is the difference between this light shining (as a word of prophecy) in the dark place, and the day dawning, and the day-star arising in the heart? Is it not the same light, only further revealed and shining in its glory, in the holy and pure place?

The apostle Paul excellently openeth the thing. Coloss. i. 25, 26, 27. First, he speaketh of the Word in general, which he was to fulfil, or fully to preach. Then he showeth how this Word is a mystery, hid in the Gentiles (for so the Greek, ver. 27. is) even in them that believe not; the Word is nigh there, the instruction and commandment of life

nigh there. But in those that receive the grace, and believe in the light, and so become children of the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light: in them Christ is risen, and they are risen together with him, and he is in them the hope of glory. So that the day hath dawned there; the day-star hath risen, and they know not only a measure of Grace from Christ, but Christ himself arisen, dwelling, living, acting, walking in them, and they in him.

Let these things be duly considered of, and equally weighed in the holy balance, and then I dare appeal to every serious and sober heart and mind, whether the inward light, the inward Word, the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, and the holy, living testimony thereof, the voice of the witness within, of the prophecy within, be not surer to that man that hath it, and hears and knows the voice of it, than any outward voice or testimony whatsoever?

Obj. But some may object thus, or after this manner: I am satisfied that there is a Word nigh in the mouth and heart (to which Moses did direct the Jews, and the apostles the Christians), and that this Word doth enlighten the mind, and doth separate in the mouth between words and words, and is a swift witness against the bad words, and a justifier of the good words, which come from the truth and uprightness of the heart, and are seasoned with grace. I also believe that this Word is quick and powerful in the heart, separating and dividing between the thoughts and intents there; and that the testimony thereof is surer and clearer (as to the hearts in which it shines, and to them whose spiritual ears are opened to hear its voice) than any words and testimonies from without. And I am satisfied also, that they who are the sheep of Christ, do thus hear the Shepherd's voice, and do know both the voice behind them, when it comes after them to reprove their wanderings, and direct their minds into the true way; and also the voice before them, when the Shepherd (who is the leader) putteth forth his sheep, and goeth before them, and they follow him; for they know his voice. John x. 4. Yea, I have had the experience hereof in my own heart: for I

have felt that work within, and that living, sweet testimony of God's Spirit in my own heart, which hath been more to me than all that ever I heard or read from without; so that I can truly say (with the Samaritans, John iv. 22.) Now I believe, not because of the testimonies or words I have heard from without, but from the evidence and demonstration of life, and of God's Holy Spirit in my own heart. Nor can I see how the apostle Peter, in this place, can prefer the testimonies of the prophets (for that which is called the New Testament was not yet written and added to the old) before this glorious, immediate testimony from God Almighty, which Christ was honored with, and they were greatly honored in being admitted to be beholders and witnesses of. Yet somewhat sticks with me; namely, those words of the apostle, ver. 20, 21. wherein he plainly seems to me to speak of the scriptures or writings of the prophets, as if they had been the more sure word of prophecy, which in this place he had directed to. For why should he say thus, "Knowing this first," &c., unless he had intended the same Word of prophecy which he had been speaking of before, and directing their minds how they might make use of that Word of prophecy?

Ans. Peter was the minister of the circumcision, and he was to deal with people who were great admirers and studiers of the letter; therefore, though he as well as Paul and John, and the other apostles (Rom. x. and Acts xxvi. 18. and 1 John i.), was to direct men to the Word within, and light within, yet he knew it was of great concernment to them rightly to read and be able to understand the letter without. Therefore, having first directed them to the Word of prophecy, to the path of the just, which is the inward, shining light, to the light which shines more and more in the dark place to them that give heed to it; in the next place it was very proper, useful, and necessary to direct them how to read the Scriptures aright. For indeed the oracles of God were given to them, Rom. iii. 2. and they ought to be diligent in the reading of them, that they might understand the holy prophecies, and precious promises, &c.,

and reap the hope and comfort of them, and be made partakers of the divine nature, which is the thing promised. And not only to the Jews, but to the Christians gathered from among the Gentiles in that age, were the Scriptures greatly useful: and so they are also to such as are gathered by the Holy Spirit and power of God in this age.

The prophecies, the judgments, the promises, the mercies, the experience, &c. are all useful, and profitable to those that read and understand them in the light of God's Holy Spirit. But the first thing needful is, to turn a man's mind to the light, that he may have somewhat to guide him, somewhat to stay his mind upon in reading the Scriptures, somewhat to open and unseal the holy and divine words and mysteries to him. For no man can truly and rightly understand the Scriptures, but as his mind is opened by the Lord, and the understanding of the words and things given him. So that this is exceeding necessary to be known (after a man is turned to the light and Word of prophecy within, and comes to read the outward oracles and testimonies of the Holy Spirit) that all the holy men spake not in their own wills, nor in the will of the flesh, nor in the will of man, but as the Spirit of God gave them words, and moved them to speak. And those words spoken by God's Spirit knoweth none, but that Spirit which spake them. So that no man ought to venture by his private spirit to undertake to open and interpret those words; but he must first receive the same Word of life, the same Spirit of prophecy within, and wait upon him, and learn to know his voice, who openeth what and when he pleaseth to the sons of men. And so when the same Word of life speaks in a man's heart now, showing things to come, either concerning a man's self or others, that man must be careful to retire, and lie very low before the Lord, waiting upon him for the true understanding and right interpreting of his own words, else a man may easily misunderstand and misapply what was truly and rightly spoken. So that this is the right way of understanding the words of prophecy from the holy men of God in former ages, and the instructions of the Word of life in the

heart. "The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him." In the true fear the ear is opened, and the right understanding given; but in the wisdom of the flesh, and in the confidence thereof, it is easy erring at any time from the true sense and right use of that which was opened and given by God, either for the soul's own good, or for the good of others.

To conclude this appeal: there is one consideration on my heart to propose to the serious and sober-minded; and oh that they might rightly consider and understand it! David was a man after God's own heart, a wise man, an inwardly-exercised man, an experienced man, a holy, spiritual, heavenly man; a man who knew the inward, everlasting kingdom, and had the Spirit of God, and witnessed his truth in the inward parts: can ye think that David did not know the Word and commandment of life within? Did not God write his law in his heart? How else could he become a man after God's own heart? Did not he witness the everlasting covenant, and the law thereof, the new law, the living law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Now when David said, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," what law did he mean? What is the law which converts the soul to God? Can any thing less than an inward power, an inward light, an inward law, an inward life, than the inward drawings and teachings of God's Spirit, convert the soul to God? And what testimony is that which makes wise the simple? Is it not the inward testimony? What made him wiser than the ancients, and his teachers, who knew and could teach the law outward? Were they not the inward teachings and inward precepts of God's Holy Spirit from the Word of life within, which doubtless was very nigh him, he being a man so exercised by God's Spirit, and so formed after his heart? And what are those right statutes which rejoice the heart, and the pure commandment which enlightens the eyes, and the clean fear and righteous judgments? Are not all these things known within, and received within? Doth not God put his fear within, in the heart? Doth not God reveal his righteous judgments with-

in against sin and iniquity? Oh, how did David cry out because of God's dreadful judgments upon him for sin, and said his sore ran in the night, and he watered his couch with his tears! And in another place, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments."

And when he speaketh so much (as in Psal. cxix.) of God's word, God's law, his testimonies, precepts, statutes, judgments, &c., what doth he speak of? Doth he speak of the outward or inward ministration of the Word in the heart? Doth he not speak of the inward writing, of the law in the heart, of the commandment in the heart, of the testimony of life there? For he had the testimony within, the Spirit within, the law within, the light within, the inward and spiritual kingdom (wherein the holy dominion of God is revealed) he knew within; and so believing, could speak of the power and glory thereof, and of God's wondrous works. Psal. cxlv.

And when he said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," what Word did he mean? Did he mean the letter or law outward, or the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, which Moses had testified of, and directed the Jews to, and he himself had been very well acquainted with? When again he saith, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" And immediately giveth the answer, "By taking heed according to thy Word." Doth he mean the letter without, or the Word within? What is it that cleasneth the heart, that cleanseth the way? Is it any thing less than the water of life, than the blood of the everlasting covenant, than the Word and life of truth within? "Sanctify them by thy truth; thy Word is truth." In the sense of that inwardly, and obedience to it, is the renewing and sanctification felt. And so this brings to be undefiled in the way, and to keep the testimonies of life, and preserves from doing iniquity. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way," saith he, "who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity," &c. Had he no experience of these things himself? Yea, surely. He knew

the holy heart, the pure heart, the new and heavenly image, the heart after God's own heart; and he knew what it was to walk in innocency, and to be kept out of sin. Hear what he himself saith. Psal. xviii. 21, &c. "For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity." What was that? Was not that it which had most power over him, and was most apt to entangle and ensnare him? Now he that arrives here, he that doth this, that keeps himself from his iniquity, doubtless witnesseth great power and victory over lesser and [greater] sins. Was not David strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Did not the Word of God abide in him? Did not he overcome the wicked one by the power thereof? How else could he walk thus in the ways of the Lord, as he expresseth, and keep himself from his iniquity?

Now this Word of life, these living testimonies and precepts, yea, the everlasting ordinances and statutes of the new covenant, with the sure mercies of David, which Word Moses had testified of, and directed to, and David had experienced (it being the pearl he had treasured up and hid in his heart), and which was the Word of faith which Paul and the other apostles preached and testified of, turning men from darkness to this inward light,—I say, this Word, this living Word (and the inward ministration thereof) God hath revealed and made manifest in this our day, and hath turned the minds of many to it, and is daily inviting men to Shiloh's streams, to the living waters, to the light and habitation of the living. Blessed are they that hear the joyful sound, and come to the holy mount and city of our God, where life lives and reigns, and is fed on by all the living; who are God's elect, God's heritage, God's vineyard of red wine, God's enclosed garden, whom he watcheth over night and day, and watereth every moment; and in whom he dwelleth and walketh, and is to them a God and Father, and maketh them daily sensible that they are his servants,

children, and spouse, in whom is his great delight, and on whose hearts and foreheads is written "Holiness to the Lord." Yea, and the Lord will bless thee for ever, "O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness!" And every tongue that riseth up in judgment against thee will the Lord God condemn for evermore. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, whom the Lord hath gathered by the arm of his mighty power (inwardly revealed and stretched forth in them, and for them), "and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

POSTSCRIPT.

There is a Scripture now openeth in me, as it hath often done, and it hath been very sweet to my taste; but I have not had freedom to give it forth to others, as at this time it is with me to do: it is that scripture Rom. ix. 18. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Now many apprehend from this scripture, as I also formerly did, that God hath chosen out a certain number of persons on whom he will have mercy, and save by Jesus Christ the Lord; and that he hath passed over the rest, so that they were never intended to have any benefit by Christ's death as to their eternal salvation. This the wisdom of man, from the letter of the scripture and many other places, may easily apprehend and strongly reason for. But as the Lord openeth the mind, and men come to a sense of his nature and Spirit, and his intent in sending his Son, and receive the key which openeth the truth as it is in Jesus, they will easily see that this is contrary to God's nature, and his intent in sending his Son, and the universal covenant of light and life, and the manifest testimony of the Scriptures.

First, As touching the nature of God. His nature is *love;* love to all his creatures. He would not have it go ill

with any of them. He needeth not their misery to make himself happy. His nature is to love, to bless, to save; not to destroy or cut off, nor to afflict or grieve the children of men; not to hurt either the body or soul of any: he preserveth man and beast. Psal. xxxvi. 6.

Secondly, As touching his sending his Son. He sent him in his love to mankind, to save mankind. His love was not to a few only; but he loved all his creatures, he loved all lost souls, and he sent his Son to save them all. He gave him light to enlighten them all, and he gave him life to quicken them all; only he dispenseth this in different ways, according to the infinite wisdom and good pleasure of his Father.

So that, Thirdly, The covenant of light and life is universal, and nigh all mankind, by which the darkest parts and corners of the earth are at some times enlightened, and feel somewhat of the quickening life. For the life is the light of men, and the light comes from the life, and is a quick, piercing, quickening light, conveying warmth and life, yea, living virtue into the darkest hearts, as it moves and finds entertainment in them.

Lastly, As for the testimony of the Scriptures, it is very clear that God would have none to perish. "All souls are mine," saith the Lord. Ezek. xviii. 4. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth," ver. 32. And again, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," chap. xxxiii. 11. I have sent my light to enlighten all men, and turn all men, and I would have all men receive it, and be turned by it. I have showed every man what is good, and what I the Lord require of him; and I would have every man answer the manifestation of my light and Spirit in him. Do ye not read God's charge against the whole earth, Isai. xxiv. 5. that they had transgressed the law, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant? Why, then they all had the law, had the ordinance, had the everlasting covenant; and for this cause it is that the curse and judgment comes upon them, ver. 6. So that this was the condemnation from the beginning,

and this is the condemnation still, "that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Men are not condemned for want of light from Christ Jesus; but because they do not believe in and obey that light which they have from him; because they believe in the darkness, believe in the dark spirit, believe in the dark power, which riseth up against the ministration of light in the heart, and do not believe in that which is given of God to discover and work it out. What should I multiply scriptures for? That common scripture is absolutely undeniable (as the Lord opens the heart unto the simplicity of truth, and keeps it out of the subtle, enchanting wisdom), John iii. 16, 17. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be saved." What can be more naked and plain than these words of Christ, who knew the very heart of God in this particular, and plainly declares what it is, even not to condemn, not to destroy, but to save men from condemnation and destruction? And would Christ have so affectionately wept over Jerusalem, had he known it to be his Father's will and determinate counsel that they should have perished, and not have been gathered and saved by him? I shall add but one place more, where the apostle (who knew God's counsel, and understood the mystery of election and reprobation, and had the mind of Christ) saith expressly, that "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. What words can be spoken more plain and full? And let people mind that these words are far plainer and easier to be understood than those scriptures which treat of election and reprobation; which is a deep mystery; and men must come to a growth in the truth, before they can receive that capacity which is necessary towards the understanding of them. But to open the thing a little, as it is now in my heart.

There hath been a three-fold dispensation of God to man-

kind. A dispensation of the law to the Jews; a dispensation of the gospel (or promise, which was as well before the law as after it) to the called Jews and Gentiles; and a secret, hidden dispensation of the mystery of grace, of the mystery of life and salvation, which the apostle calls the mystery hid in the Gentiles. Coloss. i. 27. For somewhat of God, somewhat of the nature and Spirit of Christ, the souls of all mankind have had near them, to enlighten them, and to turn them from Satan's power to God; though it hath not been a thing known to them, but a mystery hid in them.

Now that God did cast off any Jew under the law, or any whom he visits with the grace and power of the gospel, from a mere absolute will in himself, because he would destroy them and have them perish, to show forth the praise of his justice, and his absolute sovereignty, this the true sense of life in me denies; but all have a visit of that which saves heartily and in true good-will from God; and he that is turned to that which God hath sent to turn him, shall be owned and saved thereby. He that believeth in the truth, in the light, in the Word nigh, even in the very lowest appearance of it (for the lowest appearance is the same thing in nature with the highest, and the grace is saving in its very lowest appearance, as well as in its highest), shall be saved thereby.

Now mark: God's grace, God's mercy, God's love, God's light, God's Spirit, God's power, &c. is his own, and he may do with his own what he pleaseth. Now it being by this that he strives, converts, and saves; and it being in his own will and good pleasure how long he will strive and contend to save; it lieth therefore absolutely in him, even in his own will, what he will do in this kind. He may take advantage against rebellious man, and cut him off when he will; and again, he may strive and raise true sense in a man's heart, and give repentance, and pardon his transgressions, as long as he pleaseth; yea, he may so change a man's heart, and so create him anew in Christ Jesus, and so bring him into unity with the pure seed, and to that estate in the

seed, as that he may have assurance he shall never be utterly cast off; but that though he should sin, and transgress the holy law of God's Spirit, his iniquity shall be chastised with stripes, and his soul recovered and brought back thereby, but not utterly rejected by the Lord. Now it being thus, hath not God mercy on whom he will? And doth not he harden as he pleaseth? Did not God give up the Jews to hardness, after much striving with them? Did not God give up the Gentiles to hardness, and to vain imaginations concerning the true God, after they had rejected a measure of the true knowledge? Rom. i. 21. Have not the vessels of wrath, who are fitted to destruction, a day of much long-suffering first? Rom. ix. 22. Had not the old world, who were fitted for that destruction of the flood, a long day of patience and forbearance from God, his Spirit reproving of them, and striving with them? To what end did God forbear them, and cause his Spirit to strive with them? Was it not to lead them to repentance, that thereby they might have avoided that destruction, which, by their rebellion and stiffness of spirit against God's good and tender Spirit, they were fitted for, and exposed to? See Rom. ii. 4. So for Cain, how tenderly did God deal with him! how uprightly did God seek his good! Would not God have had him come to a true sense and repentance? Would not God have had him believed and offered in the faith, and been accepted as his brother was? And for Pharaoh, God indeed was against that nature and spirit in him which oppressed Israel; but would not the Lord have had him denied and turned from that nature and spirit, and let Israel go? God would have no man do evil, and bring upon himself destruction; though in his just judgment he is many times provoked to give men up to that which leadeth into and hardeneth in evil. So not only Pharaoh, but Israel also, was given up to their own hearts' lusts, when they would none of the Lord, nor hearken to his counsel. Psa. lxxxi. 12. But saith the Lord, oh that it had been otherwise! "Oh! that my people had hearkened unto me!" &c. it should then have been otherwise with them, ver. 13. &c.

So that God of himself doth not desire the destruction of his creature; nor doth he desire to harden them, or to give them up to a deluding spirit, that they might be damned; but men first refuse the truth, and turn from it, or let it go; not receiving it in the love of it, or not liking to retain the knowledge of it (which is death to the man's corrupt nature, spirit, will, and wisdom, and such a cross and yoke as he is in no wise willing to bear); and then the Lord, in his just judgment, gives them up to the deceitfulness of sin, to be hardened by it. Now this liveth in God's own breast when and to whom to do it, according to his own will, and according to his own wisdom and counsel; so that it may be truly and properly said, "he hath mercy and compassion on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth." But that God hath determined to harden any, without giving them a day of mercy; or that it is God's will and determinate counsel that men should reject the day of his mercy and precious invitation, that they might be hardened by him and perish; this is not God's truth, but men's misapprehensions upon true words, gathering meanings therefrom in their own wisdom, and not waiting upon God till he cause the true light to shine in them, and thereby give them the true knowledge and understanding.

Therefore, since there is such mercy in God towards all, and he hath given all men a day of visitation, greater or lesser; yea, since of late he hath caused his light to shine forth, and given this age such a visitation as many ages have not had, oh! let men take heed how they close their eyes, stop their ears, and harden their hearts against it, lest they provoke God to give them up to their own imaginary, conceited, fleshly comprehensive knowledge of the letter, and so seal them up in that hardness of heart and deadness of spirit which they first gave themselves up to. For the letter, without the Spirit, killeth; and so doth all literal knowledge: and there needs no greater curse from God (it will sufficiently avenge the cause of his reproached light, and holy covenant of life in Christ Jesus, now abundantly revealed and made manifest) than to close men's eyes, and

stop their ears, and harden their hearts (in their literal knowledge and practices) from beholding and partaking of the precious life and virtue of the holy and living ministration in Christ Jesus the Lord, wherewith God visiteth and redeemeth his people.

Indeed the physician is come inwardly and spiritually, and he inwardly heals and restoreth his people, faithfully seeking after the sick, the distressed, the broken, the wounded; pouring oil into their wounds, and healing them. But there are some who are so sound and whole in their notional apprehensions and practices, that they have no need of the physician, and them the physician passeth by, as unworthy of him, and whom he intendeth shall have no share with him. "Ephraim is joined to idols" (he is well, he hath enough, he hath no need of me) "let him alone," saith the Lord. I will pour out the choice virtue of my spiritual life and redeeming power among my gathered sheep and lambs, who have need thereof, and will rejoice therein. These will know my voice; these will justify the appearance of my Spirit and power; these love the savor of my anointing and precious ointment, which runs down from the head upon all the living body, and these shall have it. These understand how I have mercy on whom I will, and whom I will I harden; and it is my will to have mercy on these my once greatly distressed ones, and to destroy (inwardly to destroy, oh, who knows what that means!) the fat and the strong, and to feed them with judgment. Oh that men did know to whom the mercy and to whom the judgment belongs! To the wisdom of the flesh, to the wise comprehenders of the things of God after the flesh, is the judgment: to the poor, to the distressed, to the broken in spirit (not to them that are at ease in the literal knowledge, but to the mourners in Zion after the holy God, and his living power and righteousness), is the everlasting gospel, the mercy, the love, the peace, the binding up, the redemption which is by Christ Jesus, the living Minister in the holy sanctuary of our God.

NAKED TRUTH:

OR

TRUTH NAKEDLY MANIFESTING ITSELF, IN SEVERAL PARTICULARS,

FOR THE REMOVING OF HINDRANCES OUT OF THE WAY OF THE SIMPLE-HEARTED,

THAT THEY MAY COME TO TRUE KNOWLEDGE, LIFE, LIBERTY, PEACE, AND JOY IN THE LORD, THROUGH THE VIRTUE AND POWER OF HIS PRECIOUS TRUTH REVEALED AND WORKING IN THEM.

GIVEN FORTH

BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Whereunto are added, Some Experiences, with some Scriptures, very sweet, and necessary to be experienced in the gospel-state.
As also, A few words concerning the true Christ;
And a few words in the Bowels of tender Love and Good-will to my Native Country.

By a long Mourner and Traveller after, but at length a happy Experiencer of, the Truth, as it is in Jesus,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see." Luke x. 23.

PREFACE.

TRUE knowledge and true experience, especially concerning things of necessity, and great concern to the soul, is very precious. As; to know the true foundation, the cornerstone, which God lays in his spiritual Zion; and the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all that are born of God; and the gathering out of the spirit of this world (with the vanity and falsehood thereof) into God's Spirit, which is truth and no lie; and the building up of the holy temple, in which God appears, and is worshipped; and the heavenly communion with the Father and Son, in the one pure light which shines from them into the heart; and the one faith, the one circumcision, the one baptism, the one holy mountain, the one feast of fat things made thereon; the one water of life, the one bread, the one cup of salvation, &c.

Now the things of the kingdom are all at the disposal of the king thereof. To him all power is given, in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; he hath life in himself, and he hath life to dispose of, and dispense to his. He gives the true knowledge, which is life eternal; he gives repentance, and remission of sins. He teacheth to believe in the Father, and he giveth faith also. He is the Shepherd of the sheep, who by his voice quickeneth and maketh alive and leadeth and preserveth and nourisheth up to life eternal. Therefore, whoever will understand aright, must receive understanding from him; and whoever will repent aright, must receive repentance from him; and whoever will believe aright, must receive faith from him; and whoever will hear and see aright, must receive an ear and eye from him; and whoever will come unto him, and receive him, must witness that new heart forming or formed in him, wherewith and whereby he is received. Men greatly

mistake and err about the gospel knowledge and religion, by beginning therein without the gospel spirit and power.

Therefore that man that would not be deceived, and lose his soul for ever, let him take heed how he begins, how he stands, and how he proceeds in his religion. The Jews stood in the revelation of God's Spirit and power outwardly; and the state of the Christians, the new covenant state, stands in the revelation of God's Spirit and power inwardly; for none can beget a new birth to God inwardly, but his own Spirit and power working inwardly in the heart.

Therefore, thou that wouldst live with God for ever, and not perish from the presence and glory of his power, mind these three things:

First, God's inward visiting thee, and making a real change in thee. I do not mean a change in thy mind from one notion to another; but a change in thy heart from one nature and spirit to another. This is the great work, which nothing but the mighty power of God, which raised Jesus from the dead, can effect in the hearts of the children of men. Now, that this may be wrought out in thee, wait for the appearing and working of that power, which (by its appearing and working) doth effect it daily more and more in those that unite to it, and give up to its operations. Oh! wait to feel the power begetting somewhat of its own nature in thee, leavening thee into its nature by the pure, heavenly leaven wherewith God waits to leaven thy heart. Thus feel thy beginning from the true root, from the holy principle, from the seed of the kingdom; and then wait to feel that grow up in thee, and to grow up therefrom, that as the beginning is pure, so the growth may be pure also. For after God hath visited thee, and begotten somewhat in thee, and leavened thee in some measure, so that there is true life, true sense, true hungerings, true breathings, after the Lord and his righteousness, after the fountain of living waters, then (in the next place) mind and wait to learn of the true teacher how to come to the true waters, that thou mayest drink thereof, and of no dirty puddle, of thy own or any other's forming. Where are these waters dispensed,

and where are they to be found? Why, in the new covenant, which God makes with the hungry and thirsty souls, as they come to the Shepherd, and hear his voice, and learn of him, and follow him. Therefore thou must wait to distinguish spirits, and the knocks of spirits in thy own heart. Thou must know when the Shepherd knocks, and when the stranger knocks; and let in the Shepherd when he knocks, and not let in the stranger when he knocks. Thus, by knowing him, inclining thine ear to him, and hearing his voice, thou comest to have the everlasting covenant made with thy soul, even the sure mercies of David, wherein the union with God is sure, the teacher sure, never more to be removed from thee; the fear which God puts into the heart sure; the law of the new life sure, being so written in thy heart by the finger of God's Spirit, as none can blot out; the love of God sure, his preservation sure, the inheritance of life sure. O sweet covenant! O holy covenant! O blessed covenant! and blessed are all those souls with whom God makes this covenant, and who are kept by him in the sense and enjoyment of it!

Now, lastly, after God hath made this covenant with thee, and spoken peace to thee, and given thee of the power, righteousness, and joy of the kingdom, and set the holy hedge of his power and wall of salvation about thee, thou must take heed of going forth after any lust, after any desire of the flesh, after any temptation of the enemy; thou must keep within the holy limits, and not touch any dead or unclean thing, lest thou be defiled, and so in degree separated from him who is pure.

The occasion of what follows was briefly thus:

There was a controversy between me and another about many of these things, towards whom my love was in a travail; and having a sense on my heart that the enemy makes use of the wrong apprehensions and mistakes he begets in men's minds about these things, contrary to the true knowledge and experience which God giveth to the children which are born of the heavenly womb, who indeed alone can rightly plead for and justify their mother, in this day of

great strife and contention about the kingdom, and the right heir thereof,—I say, having this sense on my heart, and these things naturally springing up and opening in me upon this occasion, I was drawn in love, and in the motion of life, thus to give them forth to others, hoping that the Lord may thereby open the minds of some towards, and confirm the minds of others in, the sense and belief of the truth, and the inward manifestation of his Spirit, which discovers and strives against the darkness, lusts, and corruptions in them. The Lord give people the sense of the strivings and reproofs of his Holy Spirit inwardly in their hearts, and join their spirits thereto, that they may receive light, life, virtue, and strength from his Holy Spirit, and thereby witness the overcoming and keeping under the enemy of their souls, that they may know what it is to have the seed of the woman bruise the serpent's head in their own particulars, that so the holy child Jesus may be exalted (his horn exalted in them), and he may reign, and exercise his government in them, and they may become kings and priests to God, and reign in him over all that his power is ordained to break and keep under, yea, utterly consume and destroy, in the hearts of those that submit themselves willingly to him, and walk in the light and leadings of his Holy Spirit. Amen.

NAKED TRUTH.

I. Concerning understanding the Holy Scriptures truly and aright.

Quest. WHETHER the Scriptures can be understood aright, without the light of God's Holy Spirit shining inwardly in the heart, and giving the true understanding of them?

Ans. No; not possibly. For as the outward eye cannot possibly see without the shining of some outward light, no more can the inward eye see without the shining of the inward light. God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, causeth the light of his Spirit to shine in the hearts of people according to his holy pleasure, and thereby they come to see. God seeth all things in his own light, in the light of his pure, eternal Spirit; and in his light do the children of light see light. The things of God's kingdom are holy mysteries, and the words which he speaks concerning those holy mysteries none can understand, but as he pleaseth to open and reveal them. He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true. 1 John v. 20. "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding," (Job xxxii. 8) without which, man is dead, and can neither hear, nor see, nor understand any of the things of God's kingdom.

II. Concerning the illuminating Spirit, and sanctifying Spirit.

Quest. Whether the illuminating and sanctifying Spirit be one and the same Spirit or no? because it is affirmed by some (and written by one to me as a sound distinction of divines, which distinction he saith he hath a mind I should learn) that there is a Spirit of sanctification, and that is peculiar to the godly; and there is a Spirit illuminating,

and that is oft vouchsafed to the wicked, as it was to Balaam.

Ans. The Spirit which illuminateth, and the Spirit which sanctifieth, is one and the same Spirit; and the illumination of the Spirit is in order unto sanctification. The same light which discovereth the darkness, also chaseth away the darkness, as it is received and subjected to, and purifieth the mind; for the light hath not only a property of enlightening, but also of cleansing and sanctifying. And the reason why men are not changed, justified, and sanctified, in and by the light, is because they love it not, and bring not their hearts and deeds to it; and so it is their reprover and condemner, and not their justifier and sanctifier. But the same Spirit light and life which enlighteneth, also sanctifieth, and there is not another.

III. Concerning the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Scriptures.

Quest. Whether they be always joined; or some may have the Spirit, who have not the Scriptures; and some may have the Scriptures, who have not the Spirit?

Ans. The Holy Spirit of God, and the holy Scriptures, are not always joined together; for some in the dark corners of the earth may be visited by the Spirit, become sensible of the Spirit, and receive the Spirit, who never heard of the Scriptures; and many may have the Scriptures, and yet be very ignorant of, and strangers to, God's Holy Spirit; as the Jews were, who had them read in their synagogues every sabbath day, and yet Christ told them, "Ye neither know the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

IV. Concerning the Law of the Lord, which is perfect, and which converts the soul.

Quest. What is the law of the Lord, which is perfect, and converts the soul? Is it the outward law or writing in the letter, or the inward law and writing in the Spirit?

Ans. No man is, or ever was, or ever can be, converted to God from the inward law of sin and death, but by the inward law of life and righteousness written in the heart; and

I am sure that law is perfect, the new covenant is perfect, and the law thereof perfect; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus perfect, which converts the mind to Christ, the righteousness of God, and sets it free from the law of sin and death. And David was a spiritual man, and knew the inward covenant, and the inward creating of the heart anew, and God's holy and free Spirit, and the law and testimony thereof. I will grant a great deal to the letter and ministration outward; but I must attribute more to the inward; or else God's light, and the holy experience which he hath given me, will condemn me. And as the Jew outward had the law, and testimony, and statutes outward; so I am sure the true Jew, the Jew inward, hath the law, and testimony, and statutes inward, written in his heart by the finger of God's Spirit; yea, and the same Spirit put within him, to cause him to keep this law, and the holy testimony, statutes, and judgments of the Lord; and the spiritual Jacob, and Israel of God, in this the day of their redemption and salvation from on high, do follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, and walk in the light of the Lord.

V. Concerning David's longings, expressed in Psa. xlii. xliii. cxix. and other places.

Quest. Were David's longings more after the law outward, or after the law and light of God's Spirit inward?

Ans. David was a man after God's own heart; a man that knew an inward and clean heart of God's creating, and knew the free Spirit of the Lord, and the fresh springing life thereof, and the leadings of the pure, living truth inwardly in his heart, and this was it he most especially prized and longed after. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me," &c., saith he, Psa. li. 10, 11. after his fall, showing what he had been acquainted with before, and what he now (God having touched his spirit afresh) began to long after again. And saith he, in another place, "Oh! send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy hill, and to thy tabernacles." Psa. xliii. 3. Oh,

the sweetness of light within, truth within! Oh, the precious leadings and drawings thereof, which were once felt, upon a fresh and tender remembrance thereof, cannot but be longed after again!

VI. Concerning the Sun, or Fountain of spiritual Light.

Quest. Whether the holy Scriptures, or written testimonies, be the sun or fountain, and the light within but a ray or stream from them? (as is affirmed by my antagonist.)

Ans. It is just quite contrary: for the holy men spake the holy words from the inward light and quickening life of God's Spirit within them; so that that was the fountain in them, and is so still. "With thee is the fountain of life; and he that believeth, as the Scriptures have said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit," (John vii. 39.) that is the fountain. "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 14. Who esteems and honors the Scriptures aright? He that believes their testimony, comes to Christ, and makes his Spirit, light, and life all; or he that sets the Scriptures in the stead of that Word of life which they came from, testify of, and point men to, as the fountain and foundation of life and salvation to all mankind?

VII. Concerning the Word's being a fire and a hammer to burn up the chaff, and break the rocks in pieces.

Quest. Is the Word, which is a fire and hammer, the testimonies and declarations of the holy Scriptures without, or the Word nigh in the mouth and heart?

Ans. That which I have felt hammering inwardly, that which I have felt burning inwardly (unquenchably, as the mind has been kept to it), has been the Word of life itself, from which the good words and holy testimonies proceed. That which does the work in the inward Jew is the inward ministration of the inward covenant, the appearance of God there. He is the consuming fire; he is the Spirit of judgment and burning, who, by his holy flamings inwardly,

burns up the filth of the daughter of Zion. A man may be exercised in the letter all his days, and yet witness nothing of this inwardly in truth and righteousness; but he whom the Spirit of judgment and burning inwardly comes nigh, and whose flesh is kept in that holy furnace, it will be consumed there day by day, until it be quite wasted and destroyed, and so he come to be judged according to the flesh, and to live to God in the Spirit.

VIII. Concerning God's writing his law in the heart.

Quest. How doth God write his law in the heart?

Ans. By his Spirit and power working there, whereby he both creates a new heart, and writes the new law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the new heart. "The isles shall wait for his law." Whose law? The law of the Messiah, the law of grace, which gives dominion; the law of the anointing, the law of the new birth, the law of the holy seed. "His seed remaineth in him." 1 John iii. 9. In that seed is the new nature, and the new law both. What is the law of sin? What is the law of death? How is it written in the heart? How doth the enemy write it there, but by his corrupt spirit and nature? And doth not God, by his holy Spirit and nature, write the new law, the law of life, in the hearts of those that are renewed and made tender to the impressions of his holy, quickening power? Every motion and drawing whereof is a law to them who are born of the Spirit, and taught of God to eye and walk after the quickening Spirit.

IX. Concerning the inward light of God's Spirit.

Quest. What is it which the mind is to be turned to, to enlighten it, and to work the darkness and corruption out of it?

Ans. It is no less than the light of God's Spirit; nothing else can do it. The day-spring must arise from on high in the heart, or there will be night for ever there. All notions or apprehensions concerning the light will not do it; it is the shining of the light alone inwardly which is able to ex-

pel the darkness there. It was not for nothing that Christ came a light to enlighten men, and directed men to follow him, the light, that they might not abide in darkness, and that he sent his apostles with this message, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;" and so gave his apostles wisdom, authority, and power to turn men from the darkness to the light. And if the darkness was within, which they were to be turnrd from, surely the light must shine within, to discover the darkness, and to that light must they be turned. And in this light the Holy Spirit is received, and dwells there; but out of this light, and the limits thereof, in every heart, dwells the unclean and dark spirit, and hath power and rule there; for nothing but the light and strength of God's Spirit is able to break his kingdom and dominion inwardly in the heart.

X. Concerning the ministers and ministry of the gospel.

Quest. Who are the ministers, and what is the ministry of the gospel?

Ans. They are the ministers of the gospel who have received the Spirit and power wherein the ministry of the gospel stands. For Christ came in the Spirit and power of the Father, and he sends his apostles and ministers in the same Spirit and power, that they might be able to beget, and reach to that birth which is to be begotten and ministered to. It is one thing to be a minister of the law, and to minister letter; and another thing to be a minister of the gospel, and to minister Spirit. The apostles were able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; and so are all in a degree, who succeed them in any measure or proportion of their ministry. For the ministry of the gospel is in the light, Spirit, and power of the Most High, to turn people's minds to a proportion of the same light, Spirit, and power in themselves, and so to come to the manifestation and quickening of the same life in themselves, that so they may walk in the same light. For the life is the light; and he can never have light, or see light, who comes not first to feel some virtue from the quickening

power. Oh! how precious is this ministry! Blessed be the Lord for his renewing of it in these our days! And this ministry is not to be confined to an outward order of men, as the ministry of the law was; but whoever hath received the gift, so he is to minister, as the Lord guides, leads, and orders him in the use of that gift which he hath bestowed upon him for that end. And what if he be an herdsman, a fisherman, a tentmaker, or the like? Yet if God hath poured out his Spirit upon him, and openeth his mouth, he hath not only liberty, but more, even authority, from the Lord God Almighty to speak in his name, either for turning men unto Christ, the light and life of men, or for building men up in their holy faith in him, whose Spirit and power was and is the resurrection in the life for evermore.

XI. Concerning trying of spirits, and searching the heart.

Quest. What is it which searcheth the heart, and infallibly tries spirits?

Ans. God's Spirit, God's word nigh in the heart and mouth, separateth and giveth true discerning and judgment there, to all whose ears are circumcised and inclined to it. God's Spirit is the spirit of judgment; and where he is given, the Spirit of judgment is given, and he judgeth in his children by the quickening life and sense he bestoweth on them, which distinguisheth between life and death, between truth and deceit; yea, between the same words, when they come from the dead spirit, and when they are spoken in his living power: Christ gives his Spirit to his sheep, which gives them to know his voice, to know when life speaks, and when words are living, and food for the living; and in what mouth they are dead, and cannot yield living nourishment.

XII. Concerning things necessary to Salvation.

Quest. Whether all things necessary to salvation be contained in the Scriptures?

Ans. The Scriptures give testimony concerning the one thing necessary to salvation; but the thing itself, Christ

himself, the seed itself, is not contained in the Scriptures, but revealed in the shinings of the true light, and so received or rejected inwardly in the heart. "Behold I stand at the door and knock." Blessed are they that hear his voice, and believe him knocking, and open to him, and receive him, who gives eternal life and power to become sons of God to as many as receive him, and believe in, and give up to, the inward revealings of his redeeming arm and power therein. "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" To them in whom, and to whom, this arm is revealed, Christ is revealed; and they in whom, and to whom, Christ is revealed, know the one thing necessary, even him who is life eternal, in whom all other necessary things are wrapped up, and by whom they are conveyed to the soul, according to its need, by him who is faithful in all his house, and takes care of every sheep which the Father committeth to him.

XIII. Concerning the true Gospel Church, or Society.

Quest. What is the true gospel church, or society?

Ans. A company of true believers in the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A company of true Jews, inward Jews, Jews in Spirit, of the true circumcision, whom the Father had sought out, and made true inward worshippers; such as are gathered to the name, and gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through him. A company of living stones, who have received life from him, the foundation stone; and meet together to wait upon and worship the Father, in the light and Spirit which they have received from him. This is the holy church, or living assembly of the New Testament; blessed are they that are of it! For about this church is the wall of salvation; and they that are added by God's Spirit and power to this church, and abide in it, shall certainly be saved.

XIV. Concerning the Way to Salvation.

Quest. Which is the certain and infallible way to salvation.

Ans. It is a new and living way; it is such a way as none but the living can walk in. It is a holy way, which none but the cleansed, the ransomed, the redeemed of the Lord, can set one step in. The way, the life, and the truth are all one; blessed are they that find it, and walk in it! In plain and express terms, it is the Lord Jesus, the light of the Lord Jesus, the life of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, the truth as it is in him, his wisdom, his power, he himself, the covenant or holy limit between God and the soul. He that comes into him, comes into the way; he that abides in him, abides in the way; he that walks in him, walks in the way. He that comes to his light, his life, his Spirit, his truth in the inward parts, comes to him; he that abides therein, abides in him; he that walks therein, walks in him: and he that walks out of the light and leadings of his Spirit, let him walk in what form he will, yet he walks not in him, the way.

XV. Concerning Christ's saving the Soul.

Quest. How doth Christ save the soul?

Ans. By visiting inwardly, knocking inwardly, appearing inwardly, causing the light of life to shine inwardly, and so enlightening and quickening inwardly, breaking the strength of the enemy inwardly, and bringing out of the region and shadow of darkness inwardly, into the region and path of light. By the light and power of his Spirit he begets a child of light; which child of light he brings out of Egypt, the dark land; out of Sodom, the filthy, unclean land; out of Babylon, the land and city of confusion (where the Spirit of the living God, and the holy order of life, and his precious government in the heart, is not so much as known), and brings him into the light, where he and his Father dwells. And this child of light is not of the nature of darkness, but light in the Lord, and walks in the light,

as he is in the light; and by the further shining and working of the light and life in him, he preserves and saves him daily more and more.

XVI. Concerning Regeneration, or the New Birth.

Quest. What is regeneration, or the new birth?

Ans. It is an inward change, by the Spirit and power of the living God, into his own nature. It is a being begotten of his Spirit, born of his Spirit; begotten into and born of the very nature of his Spirit. ("That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit," John iii.) It is not every change of mind which is the right change; but only that which God, by the very same power wherewith he raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave, makes in the hearts of those whom he visits; who are sensible of, receive, and are subject to his inward life, light, and power.

XVII. Concerning true Holiness.

Quest. What is true holiness?

Ans. That holy nature, and those holy actions, which arise from the holy root; all else are but imitations of holiness, not the true holiness. The tree must be made good first, and then the fruit will be good also. There are many likenesses of the true holiness up and down in several professions; but there is no real holiness to be found, nor righteousness either, but in the trees of God's planting, in the branches which are by him ingrafted into the true vine and olive-tree, whose strength of virtue and holiness lies in the sap, which they daily receive from him.

XVIII. Concerning Christ's Works outwardly in the days of his flesh, and inwardly in the day and inward shining of the light of his Spirit in the heart.

Quest. Which are greater, the works which Christ did outwardly on the bodies of men in the days of his flesh, or which he doth inwardly in men's minds and spirits by the powerful appearance and operation of his Spirit? Because Christ said, the works that he did, those that believed on

him should do, and greater also, because he went to the Father. John xiv. 12.

Ans. Doubtless to reach to the soul, and quicken the soul, and raise the soul out of the grave of death, and cure the blindness, deafness, hardness, and diseases of the soul, is greater than the outward, and was signified by the outward.

XIX. Concerning the yoke, or cross of Christ.

Quest. What is the yoke or cross of Christ?

Ans. It is inward, as that which is to be crucified is chiefly inward. It is that gift of God, that light of his Spirit which is contrary to the darkness, contrary to all that is corrupt; which wills and wars against it; and being received, subjected to, and borne patiently, takes away the life of the flesh, the will and wisdom of the flesh, and all the subtle reasonings and devices of the fleshly part; and so that languishes and dies, and God's plant is eased of it; and the soul abiding under this cross, comes into the true, pure, and perfect liberty, where it hath scope unto holiness, freedom unto righteousness, and is in strait bonds and holy chains from all liberty to the flesh, and from all unholiness and unrighteousness of every kind.

XX. Concerning making our calling and election sure.

Quest. How may a man make his calling and election sure?

Ans. By making the gift of God sure to him; by making that sure to him wherein his calling and election is. For the choice is of the seed, the holy seed, the inward seed, the seed of God's Spirit, and of the creature as joined to the seed. God would have none to perish; but would have all come to the knowledge of Christ, the truth, who is the seed, in whom the election stands; and his holy advice to men is, whom he begins to call and to lead towards the election, "to make their calling and election sure." So that the way of making the calling and election sure is, to make the gift sure, the seed sure, the leaven sure, the pearl sure, which

God will never reject, nor any that are found in true union with it, and in the love and obedience of it. Oh! therefore, as God visits with power (with his powerful gift), and as thou receivest power, dominion, and authority over sin (for in this gift is God's dominion and authority revealed), be faithful to the gift, be faithful to the power, give up to the truth in the inward parts, come into it, dwell in it, that thou mayest feel its virtue and delivering nature from every enslaving and embondaging thing, and then stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ the Lord (by the life, virtue, and power of his truth) sets thee free. And so here thou wilt read thy calling, and read thy election day by day; and find them sealed, and sure to thee, in that truth, in that gift, in that heavenly light, in that holy seed, which came from God, and is of him, and which he delights to own, and will never reject.

XXI. Concerning Prayer.

Quest. What is the true prayer?

Ans. The breathings which arise from the true birth, from the living sense which God gives to the true birth; these are the true prayer. There is a Spirit of prayer and supplication given by God to his children to wrestle and prevail with him by. All prayer that arises from, and is given by, that Spirit, is true prayer; all other prayer is not right and true, but at best an imitation of the true. "We know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Mark: the very groanings that come from God's Spirit, from his breathing and work upon the heart, are right prayers in God's sight; but other sighs and groans are not so.

XXII. Concerning Repentance.

Quest. Which is the true repentance?

Ans. That which Christ gives, whom God hath exalted to be the prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Acts. v. 31. It is not in man's power to

repent; his heart is hard and impenitent. It is God's power which melteth, tendereth, and changeth the heart. So that there is a great difference between the sense and sorrow of man's nature, and the sense and sorrow which God gives to the heart which he renews and changes. The one is of an earthly, the other of a heavenly, nature. The one is like the early dew, or morning cloud, it soon passeth away; the other is written in the new heart, and abideth. So that in it there is a real sorrow and mourning over the corrupt nature, and all the dead works of the flesh, and a turning from them, and meddling no more with them. This is the repentance of the renewed ones, which is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, and is a godly sorrow for sin not to be repented of.

XXIII. Concerning Faith.

Quest. What is the true faith?

Ans. It is a belief in the power which saves, from a true sense and experience of it in the heart. For the power which saves must first manifest itself, before it can be believed in; and how doth it manifest itself, but by shining in the heart, which hath been darkened by transgression, to open the eye of the understanding, which the god of the world hath blinded, and to unstop the deaf ear, and so it begets and creates somewhat capable to receive its further manifestation. The Scripture speaks of a new creation in Christ. Indeed all true believers are so: and they have the ability, the faculty, the power of believing from him who creates them anew. There is that which is called faith in unregenerate men; but that is not the faith I am now speaking of, but that which is the gift of God to his own birth, to his own begotten. "To you it is given not only to believe," &c. Phil. i. 29. Mark: *It is given to believe.* Oh, this holy gift! this faith of the new birth is the faith which pleaseth God, prevaileth with him, purifieth the heart to which it is given, giveth access to God, interest in his power and promises, and victory over the worldly nature, and over all the

and mercies. Blessed be the Lord for honouring and increasing it in the hearts of his children.

XXIV. Concerning Obedience.

Quest. What is obedience?

Ans. The obedience which flows from the true understanding of God's will, and from the holy nature which he begets in the heart. It is the obedience which flows from true love, true knowledge, and true faith. There is no birth can believe aright but one; nor is there any birth can obey aright but that birth which believes aright. The true believing is from the quickening virtue of God's Spirit (all other faith is but dead faith); and the true obedience is in the newness of the Spirit. Rom. vi. 4, and vii. 6. Man may strive to understand and obey all his days; but he can do neither, but as he is quickened, taught, and enabled of the Lord. "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes." Psal. cxix. 33. There is a mystical path of life. The way of wisdom, the way of holiness, the holy skill of obeying the truth, is hid from all living, from all mankind, but such as are begotten and brought up by him in the holy skill and mystery of subjection to the Lord. "Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power." It is the power of God that works the will in the heart, and the same power works to do also; and none can learn either to will or to do aright, but as they come to be acquainted with that power, joined to that power, and feel that power working in them. And here, in this power, to this new birth, faith and the holy obedience are as natural, as unbelief and disobedience are to the birth of the flesh. It is frequently and abundantly experienced by his holy birth, by the child of his begetting. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

XXV. Concerning Justification.

Quest. What is justification, or how is a man justified in the sight of God?

Ans. By a true sense of, and faith in, that which justifies; which is the Spirit, the life, the water, the blood, the vir-

tue, the power of the Lord Jesus. All these are one in nature, and they go together. Man is sinful naturally, fallen from God, found a transgressor against him. Now he needs justification from his sins, and he needs justification in respect of what God hath entrusted him with, and requires of him; and in the new birth, and joining to the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, he meets with both. Being quickened by his Holy Spirit, turned from the darkness, coming into the light, and walking in the light; there his sins are done away, blotted out, as if they had never been, for his name's sake; and there he receiveth a new ability, a new heart, a new Spirit, yea, the Spirit of the living God, to quicken him, and work in him; and whatever he doth in this Spirit (or rather what God doth by him, in and through this Spirit) is justified, owned, and accepted. God finds no fault in any of the fruits of his own Spirit (in any of the children of men), but only in the fruits of the flesh. And if, for want of watchfulness, the enemy should prevail, and draw into a snare; yet upon turning to the light of God's Holy Spirit, which discovers and reproves for it, in the holy light the water flows, the blood is sprinkled, the conscience is cleansed, and so becomes clean even in God's sight. Oh! blessed is he who is not deceived with dead notions of justification, but feels the justification which comes from God, and is accompanied with a living sense, and with the testimony of his Holy Spirit.

XXVI. Concerning good Works.

Quest. What are good works?

Ans. The works that flow from God's good Spirit, the works that are wrought in God, they are good works. The works of the new birth, of the new creature, are good works; whereas all the works of the flesh are bad, though never so finely painted. All its thoughts, imaginations, reasonings, willings, runnings, hunting to find out God and heavenly things, with all its sacrifices, are corrupt and evil, having of the bad leaven, of the bad nature in them. Make the tree good, or its fruit can never be good: so that they are

only the good works that flow from the good tree, from the good root. And here all the works of the flesh, though never so glorious and taking in man's eye, are shut out by God's measure, by God's line and plummet of righteousness and true judgment; and every work of God's Spirit, the meanest work of faith, the least labor of true love, the least shining of life in the heart, and the giving up thereto, is owned by God as coming from him, and wrought in him, who worketh both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. He that is gathered to the light which God hath enlightened him with, hath received the light, dwelleth in the light, and walketh in the light; the Spirit of the living God is near him, and dwelleth with him, and worketh in him; and he bringeth his deeds to the light, where it is manifest that they are wrought in God. But he that is out of the inward light of God's Holy Spirit, his works are not wrought in God, and so can but make a fair show in the flesh (to the fleshly eye) but are not good in God's sight. The erring man's way and works are often right in his own eyes; ah! but blessed is he whose way and works are good and right in the eye of the Lord, in the judgment of his searching, unerring light and Spirit.

XXVII. Concerning Love.

Quest. Which is the true love?

Ans. The love which ariseth from the nature which God begets, and from this circumcising the heart from the other nature. Love is the beautiful thing. What can be higher expressed concerning God himself, than to say he is love? Love is greatly commended and admired, and there are many pretenders to it; but none have the true love, but only those that are born of God, and circumcised by him. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx. 6. Mark: the true love ariseth from the true circumcision; and the more a man comes to have his heart circumcised from the fleshly nature, and to grow up in the pure

and heavenly nature, the more he loves. God is love; and the nigher any one comes to him, and the more he partakes of him, the more he becomes love in the Lord, and the more he is taught of God to love the Lord his God, and his brethren in the Spirit, and all mankind, who are of his blood (for of one blood God made all mankind) according to the flesh, or according to a natural consideration.

XXVIII. Concerning Meekness and Patience.

Quest. What is the true meekness and patience?

Ans. The meekness and patience which ariseth from the Lamb's nature. Deceit will put on an appearance of love, and deceit will put on also an appearance of meekness and patience; but it cannot put on the true love, the true meekness and patience: that is only learned of the Lamb, and received of him by receiving of his Spirit and nature from him. And oh, how precious is this! how sweet is it felt in the heart! To feel a meek, a quiet, a patient spirit in the midst of all trials, all troubles, all fears, all doubts, all temptations of every kind. Indeed this is of much price in the sight of the Lord, and also in the eye of him who hath received it from the Lord, and enjoyeth it in him, and possesseth his soul in him.

XXIX. Concerning the knowledge of the new covenant.

Quest. What is the knowledge of the new covenant?

Ans. The knowledge which is given by God to the new birth: for to it the new covenant belongs, and the knowledge thereof. The truly begotten of God, the true disciples of Christ, to them it is given to know the kingdom of God; but to others it is not given. The Jew outward, the first birth, the birth after the flesh, for them the priest's lips were to preserve knowledge, and they were to seek the law at his mouth; and to them God sent prophets to speak to them, and taught them by his prophets: but concerning the inward Jews, the children of the new covenant, the children of the Jerusalem which is above, concerning her seed it was prophesied, that they all should be taught of the Lord;

they all should hear and know the voice of the Shepherd himself; they should all be gathered to the Shepherd and Bishop of the soul, and taught by him. So that in this new, holy, living covenant, God himself is the Shepherd, God himself is the Teacher, not only of the greatest, but of the very least. Heb. viii. For he teacheth them all to know the Lord, and to know his Son, and to come to his Son, and to love him their Father, and one another. So that he that is taught of God, he hath the true knowledge, the living knowledge, the substantial knowledge, the knowledge of the thing itself, of the life eternal itself. All that are not thus taught (but learn only from a literal description and relation of things) have not the knowledge of the new covenant, the knowledge of the thing itself; but only an outward knowledge, such as the first birth may catch at, lay hold on, and comprehend.

XXX. Concerning the fear of the new covenant.

Quest. What is the fear of the new covenant?

Ans. It is the fear which God puts in the hearts of his children; which fear cleanseth their hearts, and keepeth them from departing from their God. There is a great deal of difference between the fear which may be learned from precepts from without, and the fear which God puts in the hearts of his children from a root of life within; which fear is of a heavenly nature, and is the free gift of God to his own heavenly birth, and none else; which no man can possibly attain by any thoughts or reasonings of his own, but only by the springings of life from God. And he that would have this fear, must know the place of wisdom, and wait there for it; and when he hath it, this fear will soon begin to make him wise towards salvation, and teach him to depart from evil, which is the cause of destruction. Job xxviii. 28.

XXXI. Concerning Hope.

Quest. What is the true hope?

Ans. The stay of the mind upon the Lord, the stay of the

heavenly birth upon its Father: for we must distinguish between hope and hope. There is the hope of the hypocrite, or false birth, which shall perish; and the hope of the true birth, which will never fail it, nor make it ashamed; because that birth is taught of God to hope aright. Now, in hope, there is both the ground of it, and the hope itself. The ground of the hope is God's love, God's truth, God's faithfulness, God's grace, his seed, his Christ felt within; being of him, united to him, in him, he in me: here is the ground of my assurance of the everlasting glory and inheritance, which is sure to the seed, and to all that are of and in the seed. So knowing Christ within me, feeling Christ within me, living in him, and he in me, I have an anchor sure and steadfast within the veil, which no storms, no tempests, no trials, no temptations, present or to come, have power over. And then there is the hope, or hoping itself; that is, the staying of the mind upon the Lord, the leaning upon the Lord, the retiring beyond all thoughts or reasonings or lookings out, to the inward life; to feel somewhat spring from it, for the soul to hope or trust in, beyond all outward appearance. And this hope never deceives nor makes ashamed those who are taught of God thus to stay their minds upon him. Nay, though the state be darkness, and no light seen; yet beneath the darkness there is somewhat to stay the mind of the child and servant of the Lord till he appear, and cause light to break out of obscurity; for light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright, even in their darkest, saddest, and most distressed conditions; in all which the Lord is near them, and there is still ground for them to hope in him.

XXXII. Concerning Peace.

Quest. Which is the true peace?

Ans. The peace which God speaks to the soul; the peace which Christ gives to his own disciples. The way of truth, the way of life leads to peace; and the peace which is found therein is of God's giving, and is the true peace. First, God breathes upon the heart, begets a right birth, a true

child; then he leads him into the holy way, the righteous way; from that which loads and burdens, to that wherein is the ease and rest. Thus in the believing and following him there is joy and peace. This is experienced by all the true travellers, and by none else. No man, with all his wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, can so much as guess at what this peace is. The peace of God, the peace which he speaks to his children, the nature of it, the sweetness of it, the heavenliness of it, passeth man's understanding; but he who is born from above, who hath a new and heavenly understanding, he knoweth the nature, excellency, and preciousness of it; and would not for all this world, for any fear, or danger, or expectation of any thing from without, hazard the breaking off this precious peace and rest of his soul in his God.

XXXIII. Concerning Joy.

Quest. Which is the true joy?

Ans. The joy which flows from God's presence, and the work of his power in the heart, and the assured expectation which he gives of the full inheritance and glory of life everlasting. When the bridegroom is present, when the soul is gathered home to him, married to him, in union with him, in the holy, living fellowship; when he appears against the enemies of the soul, rising up against them, breaking, scattering them, and giving of his good things, filling with life, filling with love, filling with virtue, feasting the soul in the presence of the Father; oh, what sweet joy! oh, what fulness of joy is there then in the heart! "In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore," said the psalmist. Ps. xvi. 11. Surely he had had a taste of the thing, he had been in God's presence, and that made him cry out, "Cast me not away from thy presence," Psal. li. 11.; and he had drunk of the river of God's pleasure, which is at his right hand, which made him speak so sensibly of it. Psa. xxxvi. 8. and xlvi. 4. Christ said to his disciples, that because of his going away they should have sorrow; but he would see them again, and their heart

should rejoice, and their joy no man should take from them. John xvi. 22. How or when was this fulfilled? What were they sorry for? Was it not the loss of his outward presence, which had been so sweet and comfortable to them? How would he come to them again? Was it not by the Comforter? Was it not by his inward and spiritual presence? So that he that was with them should be in them? Before they knew Christ with them; now they should know Christ in them; the Father in them, and they in him; Immanuel, the gospel state, God with us, dwelling with us, tabernacling in us, living in us, walking in us, and we living and walking in him. When the apostles came to this state, then they came to witness the joy in the Holy Ghost, even the joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And hence it is that the gospel state is a state of joy and rejoicing in the Lord, even in his glorious, living presence, and in the glory of his power. For in the gospel state the true light shines inwardly in the heart, the life is manifested; and being manifested, they that come into the manifestation of it, come into the holy union, and into the holy fellowship with the Father and Son, where the joy is, and where the joy is full; where the power is revealed which does away that which is contrary to the holy fellowship, and hinders the holy joy and rejoicing in the Lord. See 1 John i. 3, 4.

XXXIV. Concerning poverty of spirit and humility.

Quest. Which is the right poverty of spirit, and the true humility?

Ans. That poverty and humility of spirit which springeth from the same root from which the faith, the love, the peace, the joy, and the other heavenly things arise; and is of the same nature. There is a voluntary humility, and a voluntary poverty, even of spirit, which man casts himself into, and forms in himself, by his own workings and reasonings. This is not the true, but the false image, or counterfeit of the true; but then there is a poverty which ariseth from God's emptying the creature, from God's stripping the creature; and a humility which ariseth from a new heart

and nature. This is of the right kind, and is lasting, and abides in the midst of the riches and glory of the kingdom. For as Christ was poor in spirit before his Father, and lowly in heart in the midst of all the fulness which he received from him; so it is with those who are of the same birth and nature with Christ. They are filled with humility, and clothed with humility, in the midst of all the graces and heavenly riches which God fills them and adorns them with. Keep in the faith, keep in the truth, keep in the light, keep in the power; it excludes boasting in or after the flesh, and keeps the mind in that humility and poverty of spirit which God hath brought, and daily further and further brings it into; and so the humility and poverty remain (poor in spirit for ever, humble in spirit for ever, nothing before the Lord for ever) even as that remains which brought into that frame, and keeps in that frame for ever. And so the Lord of life is only exalted, and the creature kept abased before him, and low for ever; and is nothing but as the Lord pleaseth to fill, and make it to be what it is. So what I am, I am by God's love, by his grace, by his mercy, by his goodness, by his power, by his wisdom, by his righteousness, by his holiness, which he of his own good pleasure communicateth, and causeth to spring in me, and filleth and clotheth me with, as seemeth good in his sight.

THE CONCLUSION.

THERE is mention made in the book of the Revelations, in the epistles from Christ to the seven churches of Asia, of a tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (the fruit whereof is good for food, and the leaves thereof for the healing of the nations); and of hidden manna, and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which none knoweth but he that receiveth it; and of a morning star to be given, and power over the nations, to rule their spirit, even as Christ hath received of his Father; and of

being clothed in white, and his name confessed before the Father (this is the sheep of my fold, the child of my Father's begetting, who is named by me among the living, I know him by his name, John x. 3.); as also of his being a pillar in the temple of God, and of going no more out, but bearing the name of God, and the name of the city of God, the new Jerusalem which cometh down from God out of heaven; and of Christ's new name (oh! what is that!) and of sitting with Christ in his throne.

This is the generation of spiritual kings, who have a spiritual kingdom, and a spiritual throne, even Christ's kingdom, and Christ's throne, the royal priesthood of God. Oh, precious things! Oh, rich glory! Surely eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of men to conceive what these things are.

Now he that would witness these things; he that would know, experience, and enjoy these things, must mind that seed in which they are wrapped up, as in a seed, and out of which they spring, and shoot forth. The kingdom is in the seed, the throne in the seed, the power in the seed. He that is united to the seed, and abideth in the seed, receiveth power from the seed, and overcometh, he shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. Rev. xxi. 7. But he that will be so, must not be fearful or unbelieving of overcoming sin, or his soul's enemies; but must depend upon the almighty and all-sufficient power of God, which will give him victory over sin, and keep him that he touch no unclean thing; that he may be holy, as the Lord his God is holy; and righteous, even as the Lord his God is righteous. Indeed it becometh the heavenly children to partake of the divine life, of the heavenly nature of their Father, and be like him. And he that partaketh of his nature, of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10, is holy, as he is holy; and he that from the holy root of purity and righteousness, doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John iii. 7. So it is written without, and so it is testified within, by him that is born of God in whom the seed remaineth, which overcometh the wicked one, bruiseth

him and keepeth him under: and the just live by the faith which giveth victory over him.

A PREFACE TO THE EXPERIENCES.

It hath pleased the Lord, to unseal and open the Fountain of life, in the midst of his heritage; so that in his light do they see light, and in his life do they reap and enjoy life. And the precious promises are fulfilled in the midst of them, of sending the Comforter, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit; so that he that believeth, out of his belly do flow rivers of living water. Yea, the Lord hath a vineyard of his own planting, which he keepeth night and day (lest any hurt it), and watereth every moment. Oh, the streams of life, the streams of love, the streams of grace, the streams of mercy, the streams of peace, the streams of joy and consolation, which flow from him into the bosoms of his children! Indeed grace and mercy and peace are multiplied from God our Father, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, daily; insomuch as that saying of Christ to his disciples (John xvi. 26, 27.) is now fulfilled: "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you," &c. The Father in his love hath brought us to the Son, and the Son in the same love hath brought us back to the Father; and now the love flows from the Father, in and through the Son, most naturally and abundantly. And where the heart is circumcised, and much forgiven, there also love returns back most truly and naturally; so that the Lord our God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, is loved with all the heart, and with all the soul, and nothing is thought too good to sacrifice to him, nor any thing too much to suffer for him. Oh, the pure love that springs and flows between the heavenly Father and the spiritual child! The best love that is to be found in this world (in the men of this world) is not worthy to be a shadow of it. God is love: and his children are of him, and partake of and dwell in the same

love, though the enmity and highest wisdom of this world know them not, nor can know them; even as it never could know the children of the true wisdom formerly.

Now, from this Fountain, do not only issue springs and streams of life to refresh our own hearts; but testimonies concerning the life which we feel and partake of, and concerning our travels from the dark land, through the valley of tears (where he who gave us life was our well), towards our resting-place. These, many times, spring up in us for the sakes of others: of which nature are the things which follow. For not for my own sake did they spring up in me at this time; but to signify to others the mercy the Lord hath shown me, and the way wherein he hath led me, and what he hath given me to taste of and experience in the way; which will answer every true palate, every palate that is seasoned with life, and with the true experience. And having received them from the Lord for this very end, to hold them forth to others in love and tenderness of spirit, my heart is freely given up to him therein; not aiming at any thing thereby, but his glory singly, and the good of such souls to whom he shall please to extend favor and show mercy, in opening the heavenly mystery of life and salvation to them.

I have often said in my heart, Who hath begotten me these? Who would have said that Sarah should have given children suck! My wound was deep, and seemed incurable. But blessed be the Lord, who hath made known to me the physician of value, for whom no disease is too hard; but he is able to cure every sickness, and to relieve and rescue all that are captived and oppressed by the devil, that come unto him and wait upon him, in the way of his righteous judgments and most tender mercies. For after all my religion and deep exercises, and inward experiences and knowledge, I came to such a loss of what I once had, that I sensibly felt I knew not the Lord, and lay continually groaning and mourning after him, and deeply afflicted for want of him. Oh, the pure light, and precious life, and sweet presence of my God, that my soul wanted, insomuch

that my moisture was turned into the drought of summer, and my bones grown dry and withered! But at length, the Lord, in his goodness (Oh, blessed for ever be his name!), breathed upon the dry bones, and I felt life enter from him into me, and the days of deep sorrow and distress were at length forgotten, because a man-child was at length conceived and brought forth. And now where is the sackcloth? Where is the ashes? Oh, there is beauty in life, instead of the ashes in the state without life; and the garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness! Oh glory, glory to the binder up of the bruised and broken-hearted, to the Redeemer of the captives, to the repairer of the breaches, to the builder up of the wasted and desolate ones! Glory to his tender mercy, glory to his grace, glory to his love, glory to his wisdom, glory to his power, for ever and ever, amen!

SOME EXPERIENCES ADDED.

I. Concerning the seed of the kingdom.

Concerning the seed of the kingdom, this I have experienced; that it consists not in words or notions of the mind, but is an inward thing, an inward, spiritual substance in the heart, as real inwardly in its kind, as other seeds are outwardly in their kind: and that being received by faith, and taking root in man (his heart, his earth, being plowed up and prepared for it), it groweth up inwardly, and bringeth forth fruit inwardly, as truly and really as any outward seed doth outwardly. This seed is known by its contrariety and enmity against the seed of the serpent; against all the seeds of evil in the hearts of men; it discovering them, turning the mind from them, and warring against them, and bruising and overcoming them in all that receive it, and let in its holy nature; which, as a holy leaven or salt, worketh out that which is unholy and unrighteous, dark

and dead, and seasoneth with light, with life, with grace, with the holiness and righteousness of truth.

II. Concerning the soul's food.

The soul's food is that which nourisheth it, which is the same with that which giveth it life. Every word proceeding out of the mouth of God, every motion, every quickening, every operation of his Spirit, is living, and nourisheth the soul with life, which receiveth it and feedeth on it. The spiritual manna, the spiritual water, from the holy well or fountain, the milk of the word, the flesh and blood of the Son of the living God, his words, which are spirit and life, nourish up the living birth unto life everlasting. How comes man to live at first, but by hearing the voice of him that giveth life? And how comes man to live afterwards, and to increase in life, but by hearing the same voice still? "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live," &c. Isa. lv. 3. This I have also experienced to give me life, to nourish up and strengthen me in life; even fresh life communicated from the living Fountain; and so my life is not in myself, not in any thing I can comprehend concerning Christ; but in being joined to him, in being ingrafted into him the holy root, into him the true olive-tree, into his Spirit; and so by the sap that springs up into me from him, my life is maintained and increased in me daily. Glory to his name for ever.

III. Concerning God's power.

Concerning God's power, this I have experienced; that that is it which doth the work in the soul. It begets to God, it brings out of the land of darkness, it leads through all entanglements, and preserves in the midst of them all. It breaks down the old building of sin and iniquity (both inwardly and outwardly, both in heart, and also in life and conversation), and raiseth the new and holy building. It makes willing, it makes obedient, it gives to believe, it gives to suffer. Oh, blessed be the Lord for the day of his power, which is inwardly broken forth! Oh, what would

the poor child do (the poor lambs in the midst of the wolves inwardly and outwardly), were it not for the Father's hand, the Father's arm, the Father's power, which is still with them, and compasseth them about! Oh, blessed are they that know the ministration of the life inwardly, the power of life inwardly! For in life, in the seed of life, is the holy power; which is manifest, appears, and works, as it gains ground on the creature, to put forth and exercise in it the virtue and strength which it daily receiveth from its Father.

IV. Concerning Temptations.

Concerning temptations, this I have experienced; that the strength and hurt of them, as to the soul, lies in the soul's looking at them. For the strength of God is revealed in his children against the tempter; which being patiently waited for, and trusted in, will never fail them. The least babe, the Lord would not have let in temptation and sin; but watch to that, and keep joined to that, which will preserve out of temptation and out of sin. God is faithful, who hath care of all his, and whose promise is to all his; and as he would have none sin, so none that diligently wait shall want his power to stand by them, to preserve out of sin. "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth." It is universally true. Look unto me, trust in me; look not at yourselves, trust not in yourselves; look not at the enemy, fear not the enemy; I will save you from every snare, every temptation, as your eye is steadfast upon me. What if the enemy come in like a flood? If the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him, can he prevail? What though he cast fiery darts? What though he beset round about? Will not the shield of faith quench them all? Will not the whole armor of God defend and keep safe from them all? If the enemy be resisted lawfully (that is, in true faith in that power which is engaged for the soul against him), doth not the power of the Lord arise and scatter him, and strengthen and establish the soul in the grace, and in the truth? Oh! the holy mystery of the heavenly warfare, and of the working of the pure power against the enemy;

which overcomes all his impurities, and keeps clean from them! Look not at the enemy; let not in the reasonings of the mind; keep in the patience, keep in the pure fear, in the holy, living sense: be only what thou art in the seed, in the new birth, in the life which God hath begotten in thee; then art thou safe, then art thou in the name of the Lord, which is the strong tower. The enemy indeed may make a noise about thee with his lusts, with his temptations, with his floods, with his storms, with his fiery darts; but he cannot enter thy habitation. The Spirit of darkness, the prince of darkness, is shut out of the land of the living. Abide thou there: dwell in the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, and he shall never have power over thee.

V. Concerning Prayer.

I have experienced prayer to be the breathing of that birth which God begets, to the Father of life which begat it; who by his Spirit makes known to it its condition and wants, and gives a suitable sense of heart, and cries to it. For as it is not in man to beget himself to God; no more can he pray to God in his own will or time, but as God pours out the Spirit of prayer and supplication upon him, and by his Spirit teacheth and helpeth him to pray as he ought. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." I have had a sense of the natural man, and of the spiritual man; and of the cries and prayers of each: and this I have been taught and learned of God, that the gospel prayer is the prayer of that birth which is begotten by the Spirit and power of the gospel; and which prays in the Spirit, and in the springing of the holy life and power; whereby it rightly wrestles, and prevails with God, obtaining the mercies and blessings which it wrestles with him for. For to this child there is access to God in the faith, through that holy Spirit of life which makes way for it, to obtain grace and mercy in the time of need. And through this Spirit it prays to God, and prevails with him on the behalf of others

the poor child do (the poor lam... ...avail much, as it is inwardly and outwardly, we... the Father's arm, the Fat... them, and compasseth them... ...tification, some things that know the ministration... ...n his tender mercy, of life inwardly! For in... ...ience. power: which is man... ...st, the same Spirit, the ground on the creature... ...e power, the same good-virtue and strength w... ...water, the same blood,

IV. C...

Concerning ... ...d sanctification go hand the strength and ... ...istified, but he that is in soul's looking at ... ...s none sanctified, but he in his children ... ...For God justifieth by a waited for, and ... ...according to the law there-babe, the L... ...of justification, according but watch to ... ...eep within, the compass of serve out of ... ...d toward and justified the hath care ... ...ording to the law thereof; he wo... ...ant are justified, and par-want ... ...o the law thereof. "Look ... ...d sanctification are both of is univ... ...n the beginning, and it is at you... ...e saved," saith the apostle. my, f... ...is begun and carried on every ... ...hat, God visits and reaches if the ... ...g virtue and power. He re-lift ... ...gh that he justifies; through thoug... ...as the work goes on, grace, about ... ...oes the work, from his very not ... ...g the soul thereupon, to

...and sanctification be of ... yet this doth not exclude ... and not without it. ...believing state, in the ... the coming out of ... the dead works to the

living God, and in believing in him: and so he also sanctifies him.

Fifthly, Faith and obedience are of the same nature, and always go together. So that wherever there is faith, there is obedience likewise; and wherever there is obedience, there is faith. Obedience flows from faith, and cannot be without it; for the very nature and virtue of faith is in it. And faith is obedience. For this is the command of God, that the soul believe on him (and in his appearances) whom he hath sent to save; and this believing is obedience unto him that commands it. And this faith, and this obedience, is holy and just in God's sight; and through it (but not without it) the soul is both justified and sanctified.

Sixthly, That the works of faith, the works of the new life, are not the works of the law, the works of the old covenant; nor are excluded justification, as the works of the old covenant are. For I have found the Lord, who hath condemned and excluded all my doings, which ever I have been able to do of myself, still justify and accept what his Spirit and holy power hath done in me. They are not of the same nature in themselves; nor are they so accounted of in the eye of the Lord. For the Lord distinguisheth between root and root: and what springeth from the holy root, he justifieth as holy; and what ariseth from the unholy root, he condemneth as unholy.

Seventhly, That by the law of faith all boasting is excluded, in the whole work both of justification and sanctification. What is the law of faith? Is not this its law, to fetch all from the Son, to do all in the Son? to quit self, and its own ability, and to perform all in the newness of the Spirit, in the ability which is of God, given and continued, in and through his grace and mercy, to the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ? All the veins of life, all the streams of the new covenant run here. Here is no boasting of the creature; here can be no boasting: for all its ability and strength is shut out; and that which is given of God to it, is all and doth all. Yet every Jew here hath praise of God. His faith is commended, his love is commended, his faith-

fulness is commended, his zeal for the Lord, his obedience to the Lord, his patience in suffering, is commended, &c. But the praise and honour of all redounds not to his flesh, but to the Spirit and grace of God in him. So that here flesh is laid low, and kept in the dust for ever, and God alone exalted in this day of his pure power in the heart. He that truly believeth, entereth into rest. How into rest? From what doth he rest? Why, from his own works, from the works of the flesh; yea, from the works of the old covenant; from the works that arise from his own ability, from the works wherein he can never be justified with the gospel justification. But doth he cease from the works of faith? Doth he cease from the labor of love? Doth he cease from obedience to any thing that God requires? Nay: then surely he rather beginneth to work and labor in the vineyard; and his labor is not in vain in the Lord.

VII. Concerning Faith.

Several things I have experienced, both concerning the nature, virtue, and operations of it; some whereof (as I feel them spring up livingly in my heart) I may mention at this time.

First, This I have often experienced; that it is a hard thing truly and rightly to believe. It is an easy matter to believe notions concerning God, and concerning Christ: but to believe in God, to believe in Christ, to believe in him that raised up Jesus, to believe in the light, life, and power, which flows from Jesus; this indeed is hard, by reason of the great darkness and ignorance which man is fallen into through transgression.

Secondly, I have experienced this also; that faith is God's gift, and that it flows from the power of his life. There is first a quickening, first a touching of the heart, by the holy, pure power of the Lord; and when a man is touched and quickened, then in and by and through that virtue which flows into him, he can believe in that which toucheth and quickeneth him.

Thirdly, That faith never stands in a man's own power,

but always in the virtue and power of the life of the Son. So that he that will believe aright, must wait to feel the life of the Son revealed in him, and faith flowing therefrom. For the true belief springs from the life of the holy root; and from the flowing up and springing up of that life, faith receives its nourishment and daily virtue.

Fourthly, I have observed this in my travels; that the earthly wisdom, and notions therefrom got into the mind, and held in the mind out of the sense of life, are a great let to faith. For these strengthen and nourish that in man, which is to be weakened and die; that life, and the birth of life, may be all in the heart. Man is to die; man is to be ceased from; his understanding, his wisdom, is to be brought to nought. But after it hath had a stroke and wound from God's Holy Spirit and power (even the very wound which tends to death), yet it will be getting life again (getting its deadly wound healed), and nourishing its life by those very notions, which came from that life and power, which in measure slew it. And thus the Jew outward hath his life in the outwardness of knowledge, in the outwardness of the law, in the letter which killeth: for the relation and outward knowledge of things killeth and deadeneth more and more, unless man come into the inward life and virtue, and daily feel them quickened there. "If ye live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit," said the apostle. A man cannot live in an outwardness of knowledge concerning the Spirit and power of the endless life; but he that would truly live, must live in the Spirit itself; and he that would rightly walk on in his way, must walk in that Spirit wherein he received life, and wherein he that abideth lives before the Lord.

Fifthly, This I have also observed; that all notional faith, wherein is not the living virtue (as concerning Christ, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; and concerning justification by him, &c.) the enemy will let the soul alone with, and let him enjoy peace in; but his war is desperately against the true faith, against faith in the true power, against faith in the light of life. Oh, how many

sore and sharp assaults doth he make against the faith which receives its virtue from God, and causeth the soul to live to God! And how sore is it with the soul, when faith is weak, and the enemy comes on against it with the strength of his assaults and temptations. "Lord increase our faith," said the sensible disciples.

Sixthly, It is a precious thing to feel faith quickened by God, and helped by God, against the enemy. For then the enemy cannot prevail against the soul; but the soul, through the virtue and power of life, prevails over the enemy in the faith. And this is the great work of a Christian, not only to wrestle and fight, but to learn so to wrestle, and so to fight, as to overcome.

Seventhly, That in the pure fear (not that which is taught by the precepts of men, but which God puts into the heart) faith hath its strength, and exercises its strength. Oh! who knows the preciousness of this fear! The power of faith, the power of life, the power of salvation, and everlasting preservation is revealed in it. Therefore, saith the Lord, when he speaketh of providing for his children in the new covenant, that they shall abide with him for ever, and not depart any more from him, as the children of the old covenant did; "I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." And when the angel preached the everlasting gospel, how did he preach it? "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgments is come," &c. Rev. xiv. When the pure fear is felt, when that which is contrary to God is judged; then the gospel is known, and the work thereof experienced in the heart. And how easy is it, when the pure fear is felt, to distrust and deny one's self, and trust in the Lord! Oh, how weak are the reasonings and imaginations then, and how strong is the power which scatters them, and lifts up the head over them!

Now it concerns every one deeply to consider, of what nature his faith is, and what virtue is in it, and what it can do in and through the power of the Lord for him; how it fetcheth in the true, living nourishment every day, how it

delivers the soul, and gives it victory over that which faith was appointed to deliver from. For he, who through the faith overcometh that which is contrary to God, shall inherit; and he that fights the good fight of faith, shall overcome: but he that overcomes not his enemies, which stand in his way, shall be sure to be hindered by them from attaining to his journey's end.

VIII. Concerning Obedience, some experiences also.

First, True obedience, gospel obedience, flows from life, flows from the living faith. If I could obey in all things that God requires of me, yet that would not satisfy me, unless I felt my obedience flow from the birth of his life in me. "My Father doth all in me," saith Christ. This was Christ's comfort. And to feel Christ do all in the soul, is the comfort of every one that truly believes in him.

Secondly, True obedience, gospel obedience, is natural to the birth which is born of God. It is unnatural to the flesh, to man's wisdom, to deny himself, and take up the cross; but it is natural to the birth which is born of God's Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit;" and it is natural to it to be conversant in, and exercised about, that which is spiritual.

Thirdly, That honoring and pleasing, and answering the will of the Lord, is the proper aim of the truly obedient. Oh, how do they delight to do the will of God! "I have meat," saith Christ, "that ye know not of." To do the will was his meat and drink: and it is meat and drink to all that are of his nature and Spirit. If I should never have any other reward, but the pleasure of obedience; yet I could not but say and testify, that in answering the law of the pure life, in keeping the holy statutes and commandments of God's Spirit, there is a great reward. But yet there is a crown also, and a reaping after this life of every thing that is sown to the Spirit: and the crown is weighty and everlastingly glorious.

Fourthly, Gospel obedience is exceeding necessary in and to the gospel state. Mark: *The Lamb is the leader:* and can

any be saved by him, but they that follow him? When Christ calls out of the world, must not the soul come to him, who is the Shepherd? And must not the sheep daily learn to know his voice, and follow him; even till they come to be acquainted with every moving, drawing, and leading of his Spirit; and so come to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes? Mark: what a weight Christ layeth upon doing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Why then the disciple cannot come to happiness, but in the doing, in the obeying of the will of Christ, his Lord and Master. And "he that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock." But the believer, without doing the will, is the foolish builder, whose building will not stand. Again, saith Christ, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The disciples, whom he most dearly loved, must keep his commandments, if they will continue in his love. And his apostles taught the same, even the working out of the salvation, and the purifying of the heart, through the obedience of the truth. For mark: there is a covenant of life, a way of life; and how can life be reaped, how can the work of life go on, but in subjection and obedience thereto?

Oh! blessed is he, who meets with the power of life, which enables to obey; and who is obedient and subject to that power. For he that truly believes in Christ, is turned by him to his light, and to the power of his Father; and the peace, growth, joy, blessedness, &c. is witnessed in subjection thereto.

IX. Concerning the cross of Christ.

This I have experienced concerning the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; that it is an inward and spiritual thing, producing inward and spiritual effects in the mind; and that this is it, even that which slays the enmity in the mind, and crucifies to the world, and the affections thereof. "God

forbid," said the apostle, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Now mark: that which is contrary to the world, and crucifies to the world, that is the cross. The cross hath this power, and nothing else; and so there is nothing else to glory in. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other." Mind, here is the cross: the Spirit which is contrary to the flesh, which mortifies the flesh, through the obedience whereof the flesh is crucified. "If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Whatsoever is of and in the Spirit, is contrary to the flesh. The light of the Spirit is contrary to the darkness of the flesh. The holiness of the Spirit is contrary to the unholiness of the corrupt heart. The life of the Spirit is contrary to the life (or rather death) that is in sin. The power of the Spirit is contrary to the power that is in Satan, and his kingdom. The wisdom of God is contrary, and a foolish thing, to the wisdom of man. Yea, the new creature, which springs from God's Holy Spirit, is contrary and death to the old. Now he that comes hither, out of his own wisdom, out of his own will, out of his own thoughts, out of his own reasonings; and comes to a discerning of God's Spirit, and to the feeling of his begetting of life in the heart, and his stirrings and movings in the life which he hath begotten; and waits here, and receives counsel here; he is taught to deny himself, and to join to and take up that, by which Christ daily crosseth and subdueth in him that which is contrary to God.

And here is the fight of faith, and the good travel under the cross, whereby the holy journey is gone, and the enemies (which rise up to oppose in the way) vanquished and overcome. For here is the power revealed; the preserving power, the leading power, the conquering power of him who rideth on conquering and to conquer his spiritual enemies in the hearts of his children, who know his voice, and are subject to him; who daily denying themselves, and taking up his cross, follow him. Woe is to them that are at

ease in Zion, under any thing that is contrary to God; but blessings are upon them whose dwelling is under the cross, and who know no ease but what it allows. It will make truth, life, holiness, righteousness, faith, obedience, meekness, patience, love, separation from sin, communion with the Lord, and all the fruits of the Spirit, as natural to them in the renewed state, as ever sin was in the corrupt state. And in that state they shall be able to say with Paul; who once complained of his captivity, and that he did what he hated; yet after he had known the power of the cross, and was crucified with Christ, he could then do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; yea, then being a conqueror, having overcome the enemies which stood in his way, he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. The cause of so many complaints and bowings down of the head, and going mourning because of the prevailings of the enemy, through temptations, sin, and corruption, is because the cross of Christ which is the power of God (which is his ordinance against the strength of the enemy) is either not known, or not taken up. And this is the reason that many that make a fair show for a while, yet afterward come to nothing (but are like untimely figs, or like corn upon the house-tops, which hastily springeth up, but soon withereth) because they either never rightly learn, or keep not to the cross. For that alone hath power from God to bring down and keep down that which is contrary to him. So that from under the cross of Christ, there is no witnessing salvation or preservation from the Lord; but out of the limits of the cross, the enemy hath power to recover and bring back under his dominion again. And whosoever in his travels leaves the cross behind him, does draw back unto perdition, and not travel on, in the living faith, and newness of obedience, towards the salvation of the soul.

X. Concerning the Mystery of Life, and the Mystery of the Fellowship which is therein.

God is hid from man, as he lies in his sinful and fallen state; and no man can find or know him, but as he pleaseth

to reveal himself by his own blessed Spirit. And Christ, being God's image, there is no knowing or confessing him, or right calling him Lord, but in and by the same Spirit. 1 Cor. xii. 3. When he appeared in the days of his flesh, flesh and blood could not reveal him, but only the Father. And he is the same to-day as he was yesterday. He is not to be known now, but in the same Spirit; in his own grace and truth, in a measure of his own life. The dead cannot know him; they only know him, who are his sheep, who are quickened and made alive by him. And this life is a mystery: none can understand it, but they that partake of it. Can a man that is naturally dead know what the life of nature means? No more can a man that is spiritually dead know what the life of the Spirit means. The natural man may get the words that came from life, and cry them up, and speak great words of the fame of wisdom and of her children; but the thing itself is hid from them all. Oh! it is a strait gate at which the birth enters, at which none else can enter. The wise and prudent knowers and searchers after the flesh (and of the Scriptures, as they can put meanings upon them and comprehend them) are shut out in every age; but there is a babe born of naked truth (born of the pure simplicity) admitted by God, while men disdain and despise it.

And the fellowship of the saints is in the life, and in the light, which is this mystery. The fellowship is not outward, but inward. All they that meet together in the outward place, are not in the fellowship, or worship; but only they that meet together in the inward life and Spirit. "They that worship the Father, must worship him in Spirit and truth." Look, there is the worship, there are the worshippers; they that are in the Spirit, in the truth; they that meet in the Spirit, in the truth, they meet together in the one spiritual place, as I may call it. And so we own no man after the flesh, no man according to the appearance; but in the righteous judgment of the Spirit, those only who are of the Spirit. Indeed we are tender where there is the least beginning of the work of God in any heart; yea,

where there is but so much as a conviction of the understanding; but men are not presently of us, who own our principle in words or outward appearance, but only such as are inwardly changed thereby in the heart. It is true, persons may walk among us, and afterwards go out from us, who were never of us (as it was in the apostles' days), that were never in the fellowship of life with us, whom we could never own in the sight of the Lord, as being born of him; though we were willing to wait and watch for their good, that they might come to witness the true birth. Now from such come the offences, even from the falling off of such as never were truly ingrafted, and also from the slips of such who are not watchful to that which preserves. And woe is to the world, because of the offences which cannot but come. For they which are to be approved in the sight of the Lord, must not somewhat or other happen to make them manifest? And when they are made manifest, the world's eye is offended, and is apt to think hardly of and reproach the truth itself, because of them. Blessed is the eye which sees into the mystery, into the life itself, where there is no offence. Truth is one and the same for ever.

XI. Concerning judging according to the appearance, and judging righteous judgment. Judge not according to the appearance, said Christ, but judge righteous judgment. John vii. 24.

What is it to judge according to the appearance? and what is it to judge righteous judgment? I shall speak what I have experienced, having been deeply exercised about this thing. Mark then:

The holy Spirit of life breatheth upon the heart; and, by his breathing and working there, he quickens and begets life. John iii. 8. And that which is begotten and born of him is begotten and born in his nature, and so is of the same nature with him, as verse 6. of that chapter.

Now, to that which is born of the Spirit, the Spirit is the leader, the preserver, the supporter, the comforter, the daily quickener. He can do nothing without the Spirit, without

the present life and power of him that begat him; so that all the judgment which the birth of life hath is from and of and in the holy Spirit of the Father.

And here is true judgment, both concerning righteousness, and against all unrighteousness; so that keep to the life, keep to the Spirit, keep to the birth, keep to the power, then is the wisdom and righteous judgment of God revealed: but any that go out of this, and measure without this, they measure in the unrighteousness; and though they search the Scriptures, and think in themselves they measure from the Scriptures, yet they are mistaken, and measure but from their own knowledge and apprehensions upon the Scriptures, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, when they seemed to conclude, upon searching the Scriptures, that Christ could not be the Messiah. John vii. 52. "Search and look, (said they) for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." How then can this Galilean be he? See by the Scriptures if this can be the Christ.

It is said of Christ, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge," &c. Isa. xi. 3, 4. Christ judged righteous judgment. How came he to judge so? Why, he judged in and with the Spirit. He kept to the Spirit's judgment. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and made him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, ver. 2, 3. And no man can judge aright concerning the things of God, but in and by the same Spirit. How shall I know whether my duties be right, my prayers right, my ways right, my worship right, my faith right, my hope of the right kind, my knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures right, &c.? Why, there is none but one can determine. He who begetteth life knows whether that which is in thee be from his life; and whether that which thou offerest to him be truly living or no: and when the Lord separates the living from the dead, what will remain in many that make great professions at this day?

I would have no man mistaken about these things; I know many are deeply mistaken, as their own hearts will

one day acknowledge, when the Lord shall make manifest to them, how they have called evil good, and good evil; and put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Indeed it is just as it was in the days of Christ's appearing outwardly in a body of flesh. The same life, the same Spirit, is denied now as was then. Then the Jews cried up Christ to come; but they then spiritually saw him not. They saw the flesh, or outward form, but they saw not him who dwelt in that flesh. And though the world of Christians now acknowledge Christ is come, and did appear, yet neither do they know him who did appear, but deny his life, his Spirit, his virtue, his power, which is revealed in this day of his love and goodness to the eye of the children of the true wisdom. Oh! let not flesh judge: be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, and cease judging, for he is arisen to judge. He is Judge in the midst of his people, and he will judge the heathen also.

And every one bring this near. Wait to feel flesh judged in thee, and brought down in thee, that it may not judge in thee; but Spirit and life may be exalted, and sit upon the throne in thy heart. And when life is exalted, and doth begin to judge, oh, take heed of hearkening to the flesh, of letting in the judgment of flesh afterwards, lest the Spirit be grieved and quenched! For the wisdom of the flesh is near, and will be striving to get in and recover its seat again; and if the watch be not singly kept to God's Holy Spirit, somewhat else will be judging in thee, which will judge according to the appearance of things to thy mind, and so thou wilt miss of the true and righteous judgment of God's Spirit.

XII. A question answered about knowing God's Spirit.

Quest. How shall I know God's Spirit? How shall I know the motions thereof? How may I know whether the faith and hope in my heart be from him? whether my prayers and desires arise thence, &c.?

Ans. No man of himself, or by any way he of himself can take, can know God's Spirit. There must first be a

capacity given before any man can know the Spirit of the Lord; his life, his power, must first be felt, and somewhat quickened, somewhat formed by him, somewhat begotten of him, which is Spirit, and this can know him. Now, man in this may know him, but out of this can never know him. Therefore this is the great skill and diligence and wisdom of a Christian, to keep to this, to wait for this, to have his eye toward the pure spring of wisdom, that when it springs, he may discern and receive it; and when that which is of a contrary nature springs, he may discern it under all its deceitful appearances, and turn from it. For out of the heart are the issues both of life and death. There is all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness in the unrighteous nature, in the unrighteous spirit; and if the watch be not diligently kept, it is easy to be deceived at any time; but the true seed, the holy seed, the living seed, the elect seed, the immortal seed, is never deceived. Oh! blessed are they who have their eyes opened and kept open in it, to discern the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity, that they may be preserved safe in the one, out of the reach of the other!

XIII. Some queries concerning the seed of the kingdom, in which the kingdom itself is contained (as the nature and substance of things are contained in the seed thereof), and out of which it springeth up and ariseth in the heart.

Query 1. What is that seed which is spoken of, 1 John iii. 9. which remaineth in those that are born of God, and preserveth out of sin those that are led by it and comprehended in it? Is it not the seed of the kingdom?

Query 2. Do not the natural herbs and flowers, the natural plants and trees, grow from a natural seed? Do not the spiritual plants, the spiritual trees, the trees of righteousness, grow from the seed of righteousness?

Query 3. Was it not the great doctrine of Christ to preach the kingdom? And how did he preach it? Did he not preach it as a seed, as a grain of mustard-seed? and did he

not liken this spiritual seed to leaven, to a precious pearl, to treasure hid in a field, to a piece of silver lost, &c.? Oh, how happy is he who knows and enjoys the thing itself which Christ preached! All the prophets prophesied concerning him; and when he came, this was his doctrine, that men should mind this, look after this, purchase this, possess this, feel this planted and grow up in them, and themselves ingrafted into and growing up in it.

Query 4. Can any man be born of God, and not born of this seed? Can any man be born of this seed, and not born of God?

Query 5. How doth grace and truth come by Jesus Christ? Doth it not grow up from this seed? Can it grow up any other way in any heart?

Query 6. Is not salvation felt and witnessed in every heart (of those that are in any measure redeemed) as this seed grows up and overshadows them? Was not this the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, 1 Pet. i. 10. whereof the apostle Peter himself was made a partaker? chap. v. 10. In the law were the shadows of good things to come; but in the gospel the substance, the seed itself, is revealed.

Query 7. Is it not the right beginning in religion to begin in the Spirit? and can any begin in the Spirit, but he that begins in and with the seed of the kingdom?

Query 8. Is it not the main and chief thing in religion to know this seed, and to feel this seed, to be joined to this seed, and abide in this seed?

Query 9. Is not all that flows from this seed true and certain? Is not the knowledge certain here? the faith here? the love here? the peace here? the joy here? the righteousness here? From this root, can there grow or shoot forth any thing but that which is true? Oh! every breathing here is from pure life, and precious in the eye of the Father. Is there any certainty elsewhere? Oh! when the Lord appears, will he not disown all the religion and worship which is not of this growth?

Query 10. But some may say, How may I know this seed, and how may I be joined to it?

Ans. In the quickening life mayest thou know it, and no where else. Didst thou ever feel that which quickened thy heart towards the Lord? Therein and thereby, at that time, thou mayest feel an eye and heart opened, which can truly see and know somewhat of God; and keeping thy eye to the quickening power of God, as that stirs, moves, and operates, in thee and upon thee, thou mayest know again and know more.

Therefore eye the power which quickens, and eye the seed which it reveals and raiseth in thee, and wait to feel the power subjecting thee to the seed, that thou mayest come under it, and it may come over thee, and press down in thee all that is contrary to its pure nature.

And as thou comest hither, thou wilt find that which death hath no power over; and, as thou abidest there, thou shalt find it to have no power over thee. For, of a truth, in the holy covenant of life and peace, death never had nor can have power; but he who abideth in him who is the covenant, who is the Shepherd, who is the love, who is the wisdom and power of God, witnesseth there a sure defence and strong tower, where salvation is for a wall and bulwark against the enemy.

There are many sorts of talkers concerning the thing, but there are few travellers into it; but he alone who is a true traveller into it, and takes up his rest there, certainly knows and can truly witness what is to be found there. And this is the reason that so many (who seem great and experienced knowers) cannot receive our testimony, because they know neither the seed nor its voice, concerning which and whereby we testify. But wisdom is justified of her children; and they that know the voice of the Shepherd, know his present appearance in this our day, which is contrary to the wisdom and knowledge of all other seeds and births whatsoever. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" but he that hath not the true ear, cannot hear the true testimony, though it should ever so often be declared unto him. But

blessed is he that knows and stumbles not at the appearances of the seed and power of life in his own heart, but is turned from the darkness to the light there, and from the power of Satan to the manifestation of God's Spirit there. For the end of words (even of Christ's own directions in the days of his flesh) is to turn men to the holy life and power from whence the words came; and thither man is to travel, and therein to centre, waiting on the Lord, in the way of his judgments and tender mercies, to witness a translation from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the dear Son; which kingdom is at first but as a grain of mustard-seed, and must be so known and so received.

And now let every serious heart examine concerning himself. Dost thou know the kingdom? Is the seed grown in thee? doth it overspread thee? Art thou in it as in a kingdom? dost thou feel it overshadowing thee? art thou in unity with it? doth it speak peace to thee from the Lord? Is the wall of partition broken down in thee? Is there of twain made one new man? Dost thou feel that which is contrary to Christ subdued in thee by his power? and his holy nature, life, and Spirit, reigning over it? Canst thou read that Scripture sensibly and experimentally, "if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"?

Ah, how miserably do men talk of Christ, the power of God, and miss of the effect and work of his power in them!

Faith is a powerful thing, it gives victory (true faith gives victory), it scatters that which stands between, and gives real access to God, and lets in his pure, fresh, living virtue, upon the heart.

Love is a powerful thing, it constrains to obedience: and the heart that is circumcised to love the Lord God, Oh! how doth life flow from him into it!

Oh! away with empty notions, and come to the ministration of the Spirit, where the knowledge is living, the faith victorious, the love pure and undefiled, the worship truly spiritual, even flowing from, and comprehended in, the life

and virtue of the Spirit. Oh that all that truly breathe after the Lord might be gathered hither, found here, and dwell here! Amen.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE EXPERIENCES.

Persons that have had some true touches of life, and true breathings after the Lord, yet not having their eye fixed rightly upon him, nor discerning from whence those come, may easily lose the true sense of life, and another birth of another nature spring up in them instead thereof. This was it we generally wanted in the day of our former profession, even the discerning of that, and fixing upon that, which begat life in us; through want whereof, many of the most tender-hearted came to a loss; whom the Lord at length showed mercy to, manifesting to them the light of their eyes, and the stay of their souls. Now, to all that have been gathered hither by the Lord, life hath been renewed, and their former experiences (of the Lord and his goodness to them in the Lord Jesus Christ) restored again with advantage. And here they sensibly see, and daily experience, that nothing is of their own works, but all of grace and mercy in and through Christ, in whom they are created unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them. And here the glory is revealed; the glory of life, the glory of peace with the Lord, the glory of righteousness in and through his Son, the glory of victory over the soul's enemies, and of leading captivity captive, and treading upon the necks of kings, even of mighty lusts, which mightily prevailed over and oppressed the soul, before the Captain of our salvation appeared in the power and authority of his own Spirit. But blessed be the Lord, there is not only this glory revealed, but there is a defence over the glory; for there is that revealed which is able to defend it, and doth defend it, in the hearts of many, and in the living assemblies which have been gathered by God's holy power; which holy power (which gathered) daily

quickens and overshadows, and is a rock unto, and will be so for ever, even to all that abide with him in his holy covenant; but out of the limits of that into which God gathers, and wherein and whereby he preserves, there is no defence to any. The cursed thing, the unclean thing, the earthly spirit, the earthly mind and wisdom, the Lord hath excluded, and it is to be excluded out of his camp for evermore, that the inward Israel may be kept holy to the Lord, and may serve and worship the Lord in the beauty of the inward holiness, as the outward Israel was outwardly, to be, and to do, in that outward ministration of the shadows of the gospel state.

Some scriptures very sweet, and necessary to be experienced in the gospel state.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. There is a knowledge of God and Christ which is life eternal; and there is a knowledge of them (or at least that which men call so) which is not life eternal. The knowledge which is life eternal is that knowledge which God gives to his own birth; even the spiritual knowledge which God gives to those which are born of the Spirit; which is the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of Christ in the mystery, inwardly appearing, and working in the heart against the mystery of sin and death. Oh! precious is the birth to which God gives this knowledge, and precious is the knowledge which he giveth to it. The knowledge (or that which men call knowledge) which is not life eternal is that knowledge which man can get and comprehend from without, of himself, without the enlightenings and quickenings of God's holy Spirit and power inwardly felt, and operating in the heart.

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. xii. 3. It is precious to witness that confessing and acknowledging Jesus to be the Lord which is by the Holy Ghost. For only they that are governed by

the Holy Ghost can so confess him. The devil did confess Jesus to be the Holy One, the Son of the living God, &c., and many now confess Jesus to be the Lord, in the same spirit, being alienated from the life of God, and having no true sense or understanding of that. But there is a confession which cannot arise but from God's Spirit, and from the knowledge, sense, and understanding which he gives; blessed are they that experience that.

"It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." John vi. 45. Ah! blessed is he that can in true understanding say, The Lord hath made good this promise to me! he is become my teacher. I have heard his voice, as truly and certainly, inwardly in my heart, as ever I heard the voice of Satan there. He hath revealed his Son, his pure, holy, living child Jesus in me. He hath drawn me to his Son; he hath taught me to come to his Son: and indeed so soon as ever I heard and learned of the Father, I could not but come to the Son, and receive the Son, and give up myself to him; and he hath received me, and daily preserveth me from death, and the sting and power thereof, and giveth unto me eternal life.

"He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." 1 John v. 12. Ah, this is abundantly experienced! blessed be the name of the Lord! Many who had not life, while they had not the Son, but mourned and lamented deeply after him (the Spirit of the Lord being grieved in them, and his life not possessed by them), the Father revealing his Son in them, and giving him to them, and they enjoying and possessing him, feel that they are daily in the enjoyment and possession of pure and fresh life in him.

"My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." John vi. 55, 56. We are of his flesh, and of his bone, said they that did eat his flesh, and drink his blood. They that eat Christ, the one bread, are by that food made partakers of his divine nature, and be-

come one bread (for we being many, are one bread, as said the apostle); so that now they are no longer darkness, but light in the Lord. Oh, the pure flesh and blood of the immaculate Lamb! Oh, the incorruptible food which gives life to the soul! Oh, the living word! Oh, the milk of this word, the milk of the heavenly breast, which nourisheth the babes! but the bread, the flesh, the blood, is stronger nourishment. Oh, how brightly might this be opened, in the demonstration of life, to the spiritual ear and understanding! but the carnal-minded are thick and gross, being drowned in their own apprehensions and sense of the letter, but having no sense of the mystery, what it is mystically to eat and drink the flesh and blood of Christ (of him who is life, and gives life), and to dwell together with him in the one Spirit, light, life, and power eternal.

"For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Psal. xxxvi. 9. Oh, blessed are they that can experimentally speak thus, who know the fountain of life, and dwell there, where light shines more and more!

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3. Here is happiness, true happiness, full happiness! He that experiences this one portion of Scripture is happy. He knows the true thirst after the true waters, and comes to the waters which he thirsts after, and knows how to buy, and hath bought the wine and milk which is to be had at the waters (Oh, who knows what this buying is! this is beyond all talk and outward profession concerning the thing, concerning the precious pearl; this is the real, hearty trafficking of the wise merchant for it). And then to hearken diligently, and eat

that which is good, and to have the soul delight itself in the fatness of God's house, in the riches and fatness of his goodness and mercy in Christ Jesus; and not only to taste of mercy, but to witness it sure in the everlasting covenant, that God will never be wroth with me more, never be a stranger to me more, never depart from me more, nor suffer me to depart from him; but preserve me pure and chaste to him, through his love shed abroad in my heart, and his holy fear, which constrains me to abide with him, and to keep his commandments.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 14. Is not this a universal promise, to be made good to every one that drinks of the water of life, of the water that Christ gives? Did not Christ promise it should be a well? a springing well? The fountain is of a springing nature: and is not every drop of the same nature? of a living nature? of a springing nature? He that rightly drinks, doth he not receive a well? Oh, the water which Christ giveth! doth it not become a well in the true disciple, in the living disciple, out of which well the water is still springing and flowing, to nourish up with life and unto life, even with life of an everlasting nature, and unto life everlasting? Oh, the pure glory that is revealed in the gospel dispensation! why is it so hid from men's eyes, who profess themselves to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be his disciples?

"For the life was manifested, and we have seen it; and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i. 2, 3. This is precious to experience the life inwardly manifested, and to come out of death inwardly felt, into life inwardly manifested, and so to come into the holy fellowship with the Father and Son, and with the saints in light, for

he that comes out of the darkness into the light, comes out of the fellowship of the dead into the fellowship of the living.

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light." Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30. This invitation of Christ was to be fulfilled in the hearts of his disciples; and it is precious inwardly to witness it effectually in the heart, as really as ever it was spoken by him. To be able to say, in the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit: It is true, I did labor, I was heavy laden, none could ease or help me, till he called, till he knocked at the door of my heart, and till I came to him, and received him in; and he hath made good his word to my soul; he hath given me rest from my labors and heavy loads. He hath laid his yoke upon me, and I have took it and borne it, and have learned of him to be meek and lowly in heart like him, and I have found rest to my soul. And now I shall never complain more of his yoke or burthen, he hath made it, and doth daily make it, so easy and light to me.

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." 1 John v. 20. There is an inward, spiritual coming of the Son of God into the heart, by which coming (to them that receive him) he giveth a new and spiritual understanding, whereby they know him that is true (and without it they cannot), and are ingrafted into him and found in him; partaking of his life and righteousness, to the glory of God the Father; and so in true understanding are able to say, "Lo this is the God, this is the Saviour we waited for. This is the true or very God, and eternal life." What are all notions about God, and about his Son Jesus Christ, to this inward sense and experience of them?

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of dark-

ness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. Oh, how precious is it to be able to witness this in measure! to experience God shining upon my tabernacle (as Job speaks, Job xxix. 2, 3.), and by his light my walking through darkness! It is true, Christ was the light, he had the fulness of light, and the apostles a very great proportion: but, blessed be the Lord, I have received some, and am changed by it, and become light in the Lord; and walk with God, and dwell with God in the light, even as he is light, and dwells and walks in the light. Is not this a blessed testimony? and is not he blessed who can set his seal to it?

"Which veil is done away in Christ." 2 Cor. iii. 14. It was promised of old, that in the mountain where God would make the feast of fat things, he would destroy, swallow up, or do away the veil, or that which veils the life and glory of the Lord from man, and hinders it from being revealed in him. Isaiah xxv. 6, 7. Now in Christ there is no veil; in his light, life, Spirit, and power, there is no veil: where they are inwardly manifested and received, the veil is done away, and the glory of the mystery revealed and beheld.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John viii. 31, 32. What is this word which the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are to continue in? Is it any less than Spirit and life? And what is it to be a disciple indeed, but to learn the law of life at his mouth, and to continue therein? And what is the truth which makes free? Is it not the living Truth (the Word which lives and abides for ever), the powerful Truth, the operative Truth? This cuts between a man and his lovers; this divides between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and makes the soul free from that evil spirit which hath embondaged it. It sanctifieth, it cleanseth, it reneweth, it quickeneth, it giveth strength, it maketh free from the soul's enemies, from the bondage of sin and corruption, and brings into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: and they that are made free from sin by that which is contrary to sin, and which subdues,

overcomes, and destroys sin, they doubtless are free indeed. Oh, precious is it to experience this, even the truth that is free from sin, and makes free from sin all that truly know it, and are joined to it, and live and abide in it!

"For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. What is the law? what is the ministration of the law? Is it not the ministration of the letter? of that which is holy and righteous, by an outward or literal command? What is grace? Is it not the inward teacher, which inwardly instructeth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly? &c. Is it not the ministration of the Spirit and power? Is it not the ministration of the new covenant, where the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is written in the heart, and the commandment of life made easy by the power of the Lord Jesus, who manifests himself within to make willing unto, and to strengthen to obedience?

Now they that are under this grace, under this Spirit, under this power, doth it not break the power and dominion of sin in them, and set them free therefrom? Can sin break in upon those who dwell under the shadow of the Almighty? Indeed a man may be under a literal dispensation of holy commands against sin, and yet be under the power of sin: but he that is gathered under the wing of Christ, under the grace and Spirit of the gospel, turned from Satan's power to God's power, and within the wall and bulwark thereof, he witnesseth this true, *sin hath not dominion, sin cannot have dominion, sin shall not have dominion over you.* No device of the enemy shall be able to hurt or destroy on God's holy mountain: for his light shines there to dispel the darkness, and his power is revealed there, to scatter and dash in pieces the strength of the enemy whenever it appears.

"Upon all the glory shall be a defence." Isaiah iv. 5. Oh! the Lord God, by the Spirit and power of the gospel, in the day thereof, is bringing many sons to glory, into great, inward, spiritual glory; yea, into exceeding glory

(for the ministration of the Spirit exceeds in glory). And as God hath ordained this glorious ministration for his sons and daughters under the new covenant, so by the Spirit and power of the new covenant, when it breaks forth, he is daily working, translating, and changing them, out of the earthly nature and image, into his own divine nature, into his own heavenly glory. 2 Cor. iii. 18. And, blessed be the Lord, the defence of his power is spread over the glory of his holy mountain, so that nothing can make a prey of, or devour the birth of life, or deprive of the inheritance of life there. The Lord doth not only give a blessed lot, and lines in pleasant places, but he maintains the lot of his children; so that they can dwell in their Father's house, and feed on the heavenly food and rich dainties of the kingdom, in the majesty of the name of the Lord their God; which is such a dread unto the enemies, and such a defence about them, as none can make afraid; but they are kept in perfect peace, in perfect rest, in pure love, out of which life springs and flows continually.

"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa. xii. 1, 2, 3. Oh! precious to witness the inward, spiritual day of redemption and deliverance, wherein praises from a living sense naturally spring up to the Lord! to witness the reproofs at an end, the anger, indignation, trouble, and sorrow at an end, and the Comforter come, ministering peace, joy, and comfort to the soul! Ah! when the Lord is felt, the salvation (his presence, his power, his life, his virtue the salvation); when faith springs towards him, and the fear of the enemy (or concerning the enemy) is banished; when he is experienced to be the soul's daily strength against him; yea and doth so deliver, that instead of the former fear, because of the fury and oppression of the enemy, the soul can now sing,

because of that strength and heavenly authority, which the Lord putteth forth and exerciseth in the heart against him; when the well of life, the well of salvation, the Saviour's well, is kept open, and the Philistines, the uncircumcised spirit, power, and nature, cast out, that they can stop it no more; but the soul can draw the water of life out of the well and fountain of life with joy,—ah! then the gospel dispensation is indeed known, and the blessed estate thereof witnessed and experienced!

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayst see." Rev. iii. 18. What is the gold tried in the fire, which man is to buy of Christ, that he may be made rich therewith? What is the white raiment which the soul is to be clothed with, without which it is naked in God's sight, and in the sight of the truly discerning (and there is a time when the shame of its nakedness will appear more generally, as it doth already to the eye of the spiritual man who judgeth all things)? What is the eye-salve wherewith the eye is to be anointed, or it cannot see? Is it not precious to purchase this gold and raiment of Christ, and to have this eye-salve to anoint the eye with, and to keep it open that it may daily see its way, and walk in the light of the Lord? Certainly this is all inward and spiritual, as a remnant witness it this day; glory to the Lord God.

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." 1 John ii. 27. The outward anointing was a shadow of the inward, and had a glory in it under the dispensation of the law; and the inward anointing in the gospel dispensation is spiritual and divine, and exceeding glorious. Christ, the anointed one, anoints all his. No being a son, without being begotten by the Spirit and power of the Father; and no abiding a son, but by the virtue and

power of the same Spirit, remaining in and with the soul; so that every son receives of the anointing of the Father: Christ received the Spirit, the fulness, that he might give to them a proportion. Now to experience this anointing, and to experience it abiding and teaching all things; and to know this voice, the voice of the Shepherd, the voice of the anointing, which the sheep still finds to be true, and no lie; and to abide in the vine, in the life, in the Spirit, in the power, as this Spirit or anointing teacheth: oh, here is the sweet, the clear state, the blessed state! Here the promises and blessings are Yea and Amen in Christ: and the soul can say, he is faithful and just who hath promised, who hath opened the treasures of life to his family, to his house, to his children, to his servants, and blesseth them with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, in Christ.

"Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land: mercy and truth are met; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." Psa. lxxxv. 9. to the end. Is it not precious to witness that fear of God in the heart, to which salvation is nigh, and the land wherein glory dwells? Where mercy and truth meet, righteousness and peace kiss? Where truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven? Where God gives that which is good, and the land of the living yields the increase of life to him? Where righteousness goes before him, and he sets his in the way of his steps? Where the Lamb goes before, and the way is not known, but as the Lamb goes before, and leads into it? Where God is the Shepherd, and the soul doth not want, because he maketh it to lie down in pastures of tender grass, and leadeth by the waters of quietness (where it drinks of the brook in the way), and in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake! See Psa. xxiii. Is there not a kingdom of darkness, a land of iniquity inwardly? and do not they that dwell there, and

sit there, dwell in darkness, and sit in the region and shadow of death? And is there not a travel out of this land into the holy land (the land of light, the land of the living), and a translation out of this kingdom into the kingdom of the dear Son? And is not God the Shepherd there? Christ the Bishop of the soul there? and doth not he oversee and take care of souls there, leading them into fresh pastures, and by the soft flowing waters? Is not salvation nigh there, yea, round about that land? Do not mercy and truth meet there? righteousness and peace kiss there? yea, doth not the glory of the Most High dwell in and overshadow that land? Is not the eye of the Lord upon it for good, from one end of the year to the other? doth not he watch over it night and day that none hurt it, and water it in the proper seasons? Oh, who can utter the goodness and glory of the Lord which is revealed and shines here!

Rev. iii. 20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Here are several things, which, in their order and seasons, the living come to a certain and sensible experience of.

As, First, Christ standing at the door and knocking. What is the door at which he stands? and how doth he knock? How doth the contrary spirit knock? how doth his Spirit knock?

Secondly, What is his voice? and how is his voice heard? To hear Wisdom's cry within, in the inward streets; his call at the door, at which he would enter; must not the true ear in some measure be opened first? Can any one hear without an ear?

Thirdly, What it is to open the door? There is a door-keeper's state to be witnessed, and the right door-keeper knows how to open and how to shut the door, and is exercised in opening and shutting the door. The king of glory is to be opened to, and let in; but no wolf, no stranger, no strange spirit, is to be hearkened or opened to.

Fourthly, What Christ's coming in is at the door opened to him? When he knocks, would he not come in? Would

he stand always at the door knocking? Nay, nay; when the door is opened at which he knocks, he who is the resurrection and the life enters; the king of righteousness, the king of peace, enters; he who is the wisdom and power of God enters: and what becomes of the power and goods of the enemy then? Doth he not kill and destroy them? Doth he not consume and devour them? Doth he not empty the house of them, and garnish the house with that which is truly pure, glorious, and beautiful?

Lastly, What is it to have him sup with the soul? And what is it for the soul to sup with him? Is not here eating and drinking in his Father's kingdom? Doth he not first destroy the devil's kingdom, and then set up his own kingdom? And doth he not fast with the soul, and feast with the soul, in the kingdom which he sets up there? Oh that all men knew how near he who is eternal life is to them! Doth not God search the heart? Is not he near the heart? Doth not his light shine there, in the midst of man's darkness and corruption? Doth not his power reach thither, and assault and trouble the enemy? Doth not his pure love wherewith he loveth man pierce thither? Doth he not knock? Doth he not call? Doth he not touch? Doth he not draw? Doth he not give at times, some living tender sense to many hearts, who too much neglect and despise him, and regard not the day of his tender visiting them, and calling after them? Oh! how is the love of God, the Spirit of God, the life of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the drawings and instructions of his grace day by day resisted by the wisdom and will of the flesh, in those that are born thereof, and hearken thereto, and so live after the flesh, and not after that which reproves the flesh!

Many more scriptures might be mentioned, and also sensibly and livingly witnessed to; but these are enough to give a taste. The Lord open men's understandings into the thing itself, and give them the key which opens into the truth, even into the mystery thereof, wherein is the hidden life and virtue. Amen.

[illegible] in the region and shadow [illegible] into the [illegible] and a [illegible] the kingdom of the [illegible] there? Christ [illegible] the reverse and [illegible] fresh pastures [illegible] and [illegible] yea, [illegible] [illegible] good [illegible] [illegible] goodness and [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Christ [illegible] at the door [illegible] What is the door at which he stands? [illegible] knock? How [illegible] the contrary spirit knock [illegible] spirit knock?

[illegible] What is his voice? and how [illegible] To hear Wisdom's cry within, in the [illegible] at the door, at which he would enter [illegible] in some measure be opened first? [illegible] out an ear?

A FEW WORDS CONCERNING THE TRUE CHRIST; HOW IT MAY BE CERTAINLY AND INFALLIBLY KNOWN WHICH IS HE.

This question relates not to his outward appearance, in the days of his flesh; but to his inward and spiritual appearance, how it may be known. To which the answer on my heart is: Even after the same way, and by the same means is he to be known in his inward appearance, as he was known in his outward; which was by the revealing of the Father. For "none knows the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals him." And when Simon Peter confessed him to be Christ, the Son of the living God: "Blessed (said he) art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt. xvi. 16, 17.

And if none could know Christ in his appearance in the flesh, notwithstanding so many manifest and express prophecies concerning him, but such only to whom the Father revealed him; how shall any know his inward and spiritual appearance, unless they be taught of the Father, and hear and learn of him so to do?

But more particularly to show how the Father revealed his Son, and how they came to know in that day that he was the Son of the living God, the Holy One, the anointed Saviour; and that the same way, and by the same means, people that will truly know him, must come to the knowledge of him now:

First, They came to know him by the manifestation of the life that was in him, by the fulness of the grace and truth which dwelt in him, and put itself forth, so as to be discerned by the inward and spiritual eye in them. "For the life was manifested." 1 John i. 2. The life which was in him was manifested to the spiritual eye which was in them: and thus they came to know him.

Secondly, By his voice and knocks. Thus said he concerning his sheep in those days, that they knew his voice. John x. 4. Oh, he hath such a voice, as none hath but he! He speaks in his Father's authority (not as the scribes, not as earthly-wise, learned men); he speaks in the evidence

and demonstration of God's Spirit. The words which he speaks are Spirit and life; they that hear his voice live; and when he stands at the door and knocks, he pierceth deep.

Oh, the beatings of his hand upon the tender and sensible hearts and consciences! Oh, his secret reproofs, his secret instructions, his secret quickenings and enlightenings! How did they, and how do they, eternally make him manifest in the hearts and consciences of his?

Thirdly, By his baptism, or by his baptizing into his own Spirit and power. While people were in expectation, and mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not I, who baptize with water; but he that baptizeth "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; whose fan is in his hand," &c. Luke iii. 15, 16, 17. Was not this *then*, and is not this *now*, the way to know the true Christ? He that knoweth him who inwardly and spiritually baptizeth, him who hath the fan, who inwardly fanneth and purgeth the floor, gathering in the wheat, and burning up the chaff, doth not he inwardly, truly, and spiritually know Christ? He that knoweth the word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; doth not he know "the word which was in the beginning, which was with God," yea, "which was God"? For he is the only searcher of the heart, and trier of the reins.

Fourthly, By his mighty works. "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John v. 36. And when John sent two of his disciples to Jesus with this question: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Christ bids them go and tell John what things they had seen and heard: "How that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Luke

vii. 22, 23. "Why, herein is a marvellous thing" said the blind man "that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened my eyes." John ix. 10. He who hath the power, and putteth forth the power inwardly; who openeth the inward eye, the inward ear, looseth the inward tongue, causeth the inward feet to walk in the way of life, and the inward hands to work the works of God,—he is the Messiah, the Saviour, the Word of life, the Son of the living God. They that believe in him, in his Spirit, in his power, in his inward appearance, have the witness in themselves, the living testimony, which none can put out, or take away from them. He hath opened mine eyes, he hath opened my heart, he hath raised me out of the grave, he hath given me eternal life. He hath changed me inwardly, created me inwardly, by the working of his mighty power; and I daily live, and am preserved, and grow by the same power, I feel his life, his virtue, his power, his presence day by day. He is with me, he lives in me; and I live not of myself, but by feeling him to live in me, finding life spring up from him into me, and through me; and therein lies all my ability and strength for evermore.

A FEW WORDS IN THE BOWELS OF TENDER LOVE AND GOOD WILL TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

It is written, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness." Oh that this might be verified concerning thee, O England, even that thou mightest learn righteousness, and that the days of thy unrighteousness, might come to an end! Have not God's judgments been upon thee? Yea, are not God's judgments still upon thee? And can any thing divert them from coming more upon thee, but thy speedy returning unto the Lord, in breaking off thy sins by unfeigned repentance? Oh that thou mightest be sensible of the hand of the Lord, and mightest hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it! The Lord hath power over all nations, and can break them in pieces as a potter's vessel. They are but as the drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance; they

are before him as nothing, and are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Read Isai. xxiv. See how God will plead with nations, and consider whether he be not dealing thus with thee? Oh! hath not that been found in thee, and is not that found in thee, which provoketh the Lord exceedingly? Oh that the weighty sense of thy sins were upon thee, and that thou mightest truly repent, and turn from them; that thou mightest reap the benefit of God's judgments, and learn righteousness, and his indignation might be removed from thee, and his tender bowels of compassion move towards thee!

But perhaps some may say, "What is the righteousness we should learn?"

Ans. Oh! learn to know God; that is a righteous thing. Learn to fear God; learn to worship him aright. How is that? Why in his own Spirit and truth, in which he seeks to be worshipped. Learn humility towards God; learn justice and mercy towards men; learn to love thy enemies. If ye will be Christians, that is the law of Christ; but that which is called the Christian world, many of them have not yet learned so much as to love their friends; but hate and persecute such as fear the Lord, and seek their good, and stand in the gap to keep back the wrath of the Lord from breaking in upon them, and are wrestling mightily with him with strong cries, that he would stay the sharpness thereof, that it might not break forth to their destruction.

Learn to do to others as ye would be done to. Do not do to any, because of their religion and tender consciences towards the Lord, what ye would not have done to yourselves because of your religion. How long will it be ere ye learn this? How many judgments and distresses shall come upon you, before ye bow in spirit under the mighty hand of God, and yield yourselves in submission to him, to learn these things of him?

Quest. But how shall we learn righteousness?

Ans. Retire inwardly to that, and hearken inwardly to that, which gives the sense of judgments, and learn of that;

and that will wean you inwardly from all your unrighteousness, and teach you righteousness. There is that inwardly in the unregenerate which hardens and misleads; there is also that inwardly which tenders, melts, teacheth, and leadeth aright, as it is believed in and obeyed.

Oh that men knew the difference between these two, and how to turn from the one to the other! For out of the heart proceeds all that is evil and vain, and out of the heart are the issues of life also. The well or puddle of the muddy waters, of the waters of Egypt, of the wine of Sodom, and waters of Babylon, is there; and the well and cistern of the pure waters is there also.

Oh, my native country, that thou mightest be the first nation in this age of the world that might pass through the judgments of God, and be cleansed thereby, and be happy! Oh that thy rulers and governors were weaned from the spirit and wisdom of this world, and might receive of God's holy Spirit and wisdom, and judge and govern themselves and the people thereby! When the Jew outward was chosen to be the people of God, did not he pour out of his Spirit to govern them by? Were the judges, kings, and leaders thereof only anointed with outward oil? Were they not also anointed with God's Spirit? And can any Christian magistrate govern aright any Christian nation without the assistance and guidance of the same Spirit? And oh that all the people were anointed also, that they might be inwardly kings and priests to the Lord, and the kingdom of Christ might be inwardly set up in all their hearts, and every man might reign, in and through him, over the enemies of his own soul! Oh that the power and glory of the Lord might cover thy governors and inhabitants, O England! Oh, the prayers that have been long put up in bowels of tenderness for thee! Oh! the besom of the Lord, the besom of his righteous judgments, that it might sweep the hearts of men inwardly, that this nation might be prepared for the glory of the Lord (for the glory which he reveals in his heavenly birth) to break forth outwardly, to the admiration and magnifying of the work of his power in the eyes of *all beholders*! Amen, amen.

THE

FLESH AND BLOOD

OF

CHRIST,

IN THE MYSTERY AND IN THE OUTWARD,

BRIEFLY, PLAINLY, AND UPRIGHTLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND TESTIFIED TO, FOR THE SATISFACTION AND BENEFIT OF THE TENDER-HEARTED, WHO DESIRE TO EXPERIENCE THE QUICKENING, HEALING, AND CLEANSING VIRTUE OF IT.

WITH

A BRIEF ACCOUNT CONCERNING THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS, IN REFERENCE BOTH TO PRINCIPLE AND DOCTRINE.

WHEREUNTO ARE ADDED, SOME FEW OTHER THINGS, WHICH, BY THE BLESSING OF GOD, MAY BE EXPERIMENTALLY FOUND USEFUL TO THE TRUE PILGRIMS AND FAITHFUL TRAVELLERS OUT OF THE NATURE AND SPIRIT OF THIS WORLD.

Written in true love and tenderness of spirit by

ISAAC PENINGTON.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

"Of whom are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. ix. 5.

PREFACE.

HAVING been lately at London, upon occasion of a meeting between some of the people called Quakers, and some of the people called Anabaptists, and other confederates, wherein I was somewhat concerned, being charged or brought in by Thomas Hicks, in his second book of Dialogues, called *Continuation*, p. 4. to prove, that the Quakers account the blood of Christ no more than a common thing; and having been at that meeting to clear my innocency in that particular, but the thing not then coming in question, and I being to return to my habitation in the country (though I staid also a second meeting for that purpose),—it was on my heart, in the clearness and innocency thereof, to give forth this testimony, to take off that untruth and calumny of T. H. both from the people called Quakers, and myself; being both of us greatly therein injured, as the Lord God of heaven and earth knoweth. I have had experience of that despised people for many years, and I have often heard them (even the ancient ones of them) own Christ both inwardly and outwardly. Yea, I heard one of the ancients of them thus testify, in a public meeting many years since, That if Christ had not come in the flesh, in the fulness of time, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and to offer himself up a sacrifice for mankind, all mankind had utterly perished.

What cause then have we to praise the Lord God, for sending his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for what his Son did therein! O professors, do not pervert our words (by reading them with a prejudiced mind) quite contrary to the drift of God's Spirit by us! If ye should thus read the holy Scriptures, yea, the very words of Christ himself therein and give that wisdom of yours which fights against us

scope to comment upon them, and pervert them after this manner, what a strange and hideous appearance of untruth and contradiction to the very scriptures of the Old Testament might ye make of that wonderful appearance of God? For the words of Christ seemed so foolish and impossible to the wise men of that age, that they frequently contradicted, and sometimes derided him.

If we be not of God, we shall come to nought; nay, we had not stood to this day, if his mighty power had not upheld us. We could not have stood inwardly, nor could we have stood outwardly, against the fierce assaults we have met with both ways. And as we have not had by-ends to move us inwardly, so neither have we had by-ends to move us outwardly, as our God knoweth.

Oh! T. H. dost thou believe the eternal judgment at the great day, not outwardly only in notion, but inwardly in heart? Oh! then consider how thou wilt answer it to God, for saying so many things in the name of a people, as their belief and words, which never were spoken by any one of them, nor ever came into any one of their hearts! Innocency in me, life in me, truth in me, the Christian spirit and nature in me, is a witness against thee, that thou wrotest thy dialogues out of the Christian nature and spirit; and thy brethren, William Kiffin and the rest, who have stood by thee to justify thee (or at least seemed so to do), must take notice of these things, and condemn them in thee, or they will expose themselves, and their religion, to the righteous judgment of God, and of all who love truth, and hate forgery and deceit.

I pity thee; yea, I can truly say, I forgive thee the injury thou hast done me (though indeed it is very great, thus to represent me publicly; what thou couldst not have done, if thou hadst equally considered the things written in that book); and I also desire that thou mayest be sensible of what thou hast so evilly done, and confess it before God, that he also might forgive thee. Oh! I would not bear the weight of this sin at the judgment-seat of Christ for ten thousand worlds! And that these books should be so long

public, and thy brethren take no notice of them, but rather at last apply themselves to justify thee, oh! how will they answer this thing, when they come to answer it for ever? Oh! why will ye set up an interest against our Lord Christ (who is the truth, and teacheth truth), and bend all your strength and understanding to make lies, falsehoods and forgeries to appear as if they were truth, and not forgeries?

If ye will judge yourselves, and repent of these things, ye shall not be condemned of the Lord; but if ye will go on, to cover and hide this great iniquity, ye shall not prosper therein.

As for my particular, I had committed my cause to the Lord, and intended to have been wholly silent, knowing my innocency will be cleared by him in this particular at the great day, and the love, truth, and uprightness wherein I wrote these things owned by him.

But in the love of God, and in the stillness and tenderness of my spirit, I was moved by him to write what follows. And oh that it would please the Lord to make it serviceable even to T. H. himself, for his good!

THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF CHRIST, &C.

In the second part of Thomas Hick's Dialogues called "Continuation," p. 4. he maketh his personated Quaker speak thus: "Thou sayest, we account the blood of Christ no more than a common thing; yea, no more than the blood of a common thief." To which he makes his personated Christian answer thus: "Isaac Penington (who I suppose is an approved Quaker) asks this question; Can outward blood cleanse? Therefore, saith he, we must inquire, whether it was the blood of the veil, that is, of the human nature, or the blood within the veil, viz., of that spiritual man, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones, which

took on him the veil, or human nature. It is not the blood of the veil; that is but outward; and can outward blood cleanse?"

Now to satisfy any that desire to understand the truth as it is, and to know what the intent of my heart and words (as spoken by me) was, I shall say somewhat to his stating the question, and then open my heart nakedly and plainly, as it then was, and still is, in this matter.

First, I answer, these were not my words, which he hath set down as mine, but words of his own patching up, partly out of several queries of mine, and partly out of his own conceivings upon my queries, as if he intended to make me appear both ridiculous and wicked at once. For I nowhere say, or affirm, or did ever believe, that Christ is a spiritual man, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones, which took on him the veil, or human nature. Thus he represents me as ridiculous. It is true, Christ inwardly, or as to his inward being, was a Spirit, or God blessed for ever, manifested in flesh; which (to speak properly) cannot have flesh, blood, and bones, as man hath. And then, besides his alterations at the beginning, putting in only four words of my query, and leaving out that which next follows (which might have manifested my drift and intent in them), he puts in an affirmation which was not mine, in these his own words: "It is not the blood of the veil; that is but outward;" and then annexeth to this affirmation of his own, the words of my former query, "Can outward blood cleanse?" as if these words of mine ("Can outward blood cleanse?") did necessarily infer that the blood of Christ is but a common thing.

Herein he represents me wicked, and makes me speak, by his changing and adding, that which never was in my heart, and the contrary whereto I have several times affirmed in that very book where those several queries were put (out of which he forms this his own query, giving it forth in my name). For in the 10th page of that book, beginning at line 8, I positively affirm thus: that "Christ did offer up the flesh and blood of that body" (though not only so, for he poured out his soul, he poured out his life) a sacrifice or

offering for sin, "a sacrifice unto the Father, and in it tasted death for every man; and that it is upon consideration (and through God's acceptance of this sacrifice for sin) that the sins of believers are pardoned, that God might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus, or who is of the faith of Jesus." Is this common flesh and blood? Can this be affirmed of common flesh and blood? Ought not he to have considered this, and other passages in my book of the same tendency, and not thus have reproached me, and misrepresented me to the world? Is this a Christian spirit; or according to the law or prophets, or Christ's doctrine? Doth he herein do as he would be done by? Oh that he had a heart to consider it! I might also except against those words, "human nature," (which he twice putteth in) being not my words, nor indeed my sense; for by human nature, as I judge, is understood more than the body: whereas I, by the word veil, intended no more than the flesh, or outward body, which in scripture is expressly so called, Heb. x. 20. "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

Secondly, I cannot but take notice of this, that he hath not cited the place, page, or pages; nay, not so much as named the book, where those words or sayings which he attributeth to me are written; whereby any persons that are not willing to take things upon bare report (especially in so deep charges, reflecting not only upon one person, but a whole people), might consult the place, and see whether they were my words or no; and whether the queries I did put (indeed to the hearts of people) had any such drift or no, and might compare the words (if they were mine) both with what went before, and also followed after; and with what was said in several other places of the book, which speak of Christ's flesh and blood as of no common thing, but as that which God makes use of toward the redemption of mankind.

Thirdly, The drift of all those queries in that book was not to vilify the flesh and blood of Christ, by representing it as a common or useless thing, but to bring people from

sticking in the outward, to a sense of the inward mystery; without which inward sense and feeling, the magnifying and crying up the outward doth not avail. Indeed, at that time, I was in a great exercise concerning professors: love was deeply working in my heart; and I was in a very tender frame of spirit towards them, as any may perceive, who, in the fear of God, and in meekness of spirit, shall read that book (it is entitled, A Question to the Professors of Christianity, whether they have the true, living, powerful, saving knowledge of Christ, or no, &c.). And in this tender frame, in the midst of my crying to God for them, those queries, from a true sense and understanding, sprang up in my heart, even to necessitate them, if possible, to some sense of the mystery, which there is an absolute necessity of unto true Christianity and salvation. This was the very intent of my heart in the several queries, which generally speak of one and the same thing, under several metaphors and figures. And that this was my intent, these words following, in the second page of my preface to that book, do plainly express. The words are these:—

"Now to draw men's minds to a sense of truth, to a sense of that which is the thing, that they might know the bread indeed, that they might know the living waters, come to them and drink thereof, and find Christ in them a well of water springing up to eternal life; therefore was it in my heart to give forth this question and the ensuing queries, which he that rightly answers, must know the thing; and he that doth not know the thing, by his inability to answer, may find that he doth not, and so may wait upon God, that he may receive the knowledge of it, and come to it, for the eternal life which it freely giveth."

And that I did mean the mystery, when I spake of bread, water, the wine, the live coal from the altar, the leaves of the tree of life, the putting on Christ, the flesh and blood of Christ, &c., is very plain to him that reads singly. But to make it manifest, particularly concerning the flesh and blood of Christ; I shall recite one query; it is the 33d query, page 29. The query is thus: "Is not the true church

flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone? Is not the false or antichristian church flesh of Antichrist's flesh, and bone of Antichrist's bone? What is the flesh of the spiritual whore, which is to be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Shall ever the church, which is of Christ's flesh, be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Nay, doth not his flesh make able to abide the devouring fire, and to dwell with the everlasting burnings?" Can this possibly be understood of outward flesh and bone? Is it not manifestly intended of flesh and bone in the mystery? Yea, that it did relate to the mystery, in that very query, out of which he takes the four first words, and no more, is very manifest by the following words of the same query. It is the 17th query, page 25. The query runs thus: "Can outward blood cleanse the conscience? Ye that are spiritual, consider; can outward water wash the soul clean? Ye that have ever felt the blood of sprinkling from the Lord upon your consciences, and your consciences cleansed thereby, did ye ever feel it to be outward? It is one thing what a man apprehends (in the way of notion) from the letter concerning the things of God, and another thing what a man feels in Spirit." Is it not manifest, by the express words themselves, that I spake of the inward feeling of the blood in the mystery?

Fourthly, This query, "Can outward blood cleanse the conscience," &c. doth not necessarily, nor indeed at all infer, that the blood of Christ, as to the outward, was but a common thing, or useless. If I had been to answer this query myself, he doth not know what my answer would have been. It was put to the professors to answer inwardly in their hearts, who I did believe, upon serious consideration, could not but confess, in way of answer thereto, that outward blood itself (or of itself) could not cleanse and purge away the filth that was inward; but that must be done by that which is inward, living, and spiritual. Then hereby they had been brought to see the necessity of the mystery, the Spirit, the power, the life of the Son, to be inwardly revealed in them; and then I had obtained my end. Nor was

I their enemy in desiring or aiming at this for them, or in setting queries before them, which to my eye (as in the sight of God) seemed proper and conducible in themselves (however they might fail as to them) towards the obtaining of this end. And if they could once come to this, to own the flesh and blood in the mystery, and so come to partake of its cleansing and nourishing virtue, and not fix and appropriate that to the outward which chiefly belongs to the mystery,—I say, if they could but go thus far with me, in owning the inward life and power in the sensible feeling and operation thereof, I could meet them a great way in speaking glorious things of, and attributing a cleansing or washing virtue to, the outward, in and through and with the inward. For I do not separate the inward and outward in my own mind; but the Lord opened my heart, and taught me thus to distinguish, according to the Scriptures, in love to them, and for their sakes. For that was not my intent to deny the outward, or make it appear as a common or useless thing. There was never such a sense in my heart, nor was ever word written or spoken by me to that end; which to make more manifest, I shall now plainly open my heart, how it hath been, and is still, with me in this respect, since it pleased the Lord and Father of mercies to reveal the mystery of himself and of his Son in me.

In the first place, I freely confess, that I do own and acknowledge, as in God's sight, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, HIS FLESH AND BLOOD IN THE MYSTERY. The apostle Paul speaks of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Colos. ii. 3. The Son was revealed in him, Gal. i. 16. and so he knew the mystery of Christ, and preached the mystery of Christ. Colos. iv. 3. He was made an able minister of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit or mystery; and so he preached the wisdom of God in the mystery or Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 7. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Colos. i. 25, 26, 27. and he had great conflict to bring people to the rich knowledge and acknowledgment of the mystery, chap. ii. 1, 2. He was sent to turn men from darkness, and from the power of Satan (which is a mystery, and works in men's

hearts in a mystery) to the light, to the Spirit and power of God, which is a mystery also; and remission of sins is received in and through this mystery. Acts xxvi. 18. And I desire every serious and tender heart to consider, whether this knowledge of Christ in the mystery was not that which he called the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord. Phil. iii. 8. Certain I am, that the knowledge of God and Christ in the mystery is the most excellent knowledge, and no less than life eternal, inwardly revealed and felt from God in the heart. And here no legal righteousness, no self-righteousness, can stand; but the virtue and power of Christ's death and resurrection, inwardly revealed and felt in the mystery, subdues and destroys it all. Indeed self-righteousness may be given up in the way of notion, or seemingly destroyed as to men's apprehensions, without the revealing or working of the mystery; but it cannot be destroyed in reality but where this is felt; but where the mystery is known, is received, and thoroughly works, self-righteousness can have no place there. Now the apostle, who was acquainted with the mystery of Christ, he speaks of his body, flesh, and bones, in the mystery, Eph. v. 30. (and if there be flesh and bones in the mystery, is there not also blood in the mystery?) yea, the apostle John speaks of the Spirit, water, and blood. 1 John v. 8. Now consider seriously, are all these of one and the same nature? or are they of a different nature? the Spirit of one nature, and the water and blood of another nature? Blessed be the Lord, the birth which is born of the Spirit, and is spiritual, knoweth the nature of the Spirit which begat it, and knoweth water which is inward and heavenly, and blood which is not at all of an inferior nature to it: and Jesus Christ, our Lord and teacher, speaketh of flesh which came down from heaven, which flesh is the bread of life, which he that lives, feeds upon, and none can feed upon but they that live. And by this it is manifest (to all to whom God hath given understanding in the mystery), that his flesh and blood in the mystery is intended by him, in that he saith, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me

and I in him." John vi. 56. This dwelling in each other is an effect of the mystery, and is witnessed by none that know not the mystery. And to this effect Christ himself expressly expoundeth it, ver. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are Spirit, and they are life." As if he had said, I am speaking of the soul's food; I am speaking of the heavenly bread; I am speaking of Spirit and life; I am speaking of the mystery, which ye look upon and understand as outwardly intended by me, and so miss of the mystery of the Spirit, wherein is the quickening virtue, and look only at the outward body or flesh, which, without the Spirit, profiteth not, nor ever can profit man.

Secondly, I confess further, that I have the sense, experience, and knowledge of this also, that in the mystery is the quickening virtue, the cleansing virtue, the nourishing virtue, unto life eternal. The Spirit, the water, the blood inwardly sprinkled, inwardly poured by God upon the soul, inwardly felt and drunk in by the thirsty earth, do cleanse, do feed, do nourish, do refresh. Doth not God promise to sprinkle clean water upon his Israel in the new covenant, and they shall be clean? and to pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry grounds? Is it not by the spirit of judgment and burning, that God washeth away the filth of the daughter of Zion, &c. Isa. iv. 4. Doth not the live coal from the altar purify and take away the iniquity? Isa. vi. Oh, read inwardly! Oh, wait to be taught of God to read inwardly, that ye may know what these things mean! Why should ye quarrel at the precious and tender openings of truth, in love to your souls?

Thirdly, I have likewise this sense, and have also had this knowledge and experience, that the outward without this cannot avail. A man is not cleansed by notions or apprehensions concerning the thing, but by the thing itself. Let a man believe what he can concerning the blood of Christ, and apply to himself what promises he can, yet this will not do, (Oh, how grievously do men mistake herein!) but he must feel somewhat from God, somewhat of the new

creation in Christ Jesus, somewhat of his light (shining from him, the Son, into the heart) somewhat of his life, somewhat of his power, working against the darkness and power of the enemy in him. Now a man being turned to this, joined to this, gathered to this standard of the Lord, translated in some degree out of himself into this; here somewhat of the mystery is revealed, and found working in him; and so far he is of God, and hath some true understanding from him. And here also he hath right to Christ's flesh and blood in the outward, and to all the benefits and precious effects that come thereby. For by owning the mystery, and receiving the mystery, we are not taught of God to deny any thing of the outward flesh and blood, or of his obedience and sufferings in the flesh, but rather are taught and enabled there rightly to understand it, and to reap the benefits and precious fruits of it.

Fourthly, The Lord hath shown me this also, very manifestly and clearly, that in former times (in this nation as well as elsewhere), before professors ran so into heaps (I mean, into several ways and forms of church-fellowship, so called), they had more inward sense of the mystery than now they have; and were a great deal more tender, both unto the Lord, and one towards another, than now they are. For then grace in the heart, and the inward feeling, was the thing that was most minded among the stricter sort. They did not mind so much bare reading, or hearing, or praying, or any outward observation whatsoever, as what they felt therein. Let men have spoken ever so many glorious words concerning the things of God; yet, if they had not been spoken warmly and freshly by him that spoke them, there was little satisfaction to the soul that hungered after that which was living, but rather an inward grief and dissatisfaction felt: so that in that day there was an inward sense of the mystery, though not a distinct knowledge of it, which was precious in the eye of God, and very savory inwardly in the heart. But now, in so long time, by looking so much outward, and beating their brains, and disputing about the outward, many have very much, if not wholly,

lost the sense of the inward, and are found contending for the outward, against the very appearance and manifestation of the inward; and so are in danger of being hardened and sealed up in that which is dead and literal, out of the limits of that which is living and spiritual. It is a dreadful thing to fight against the living God, and his living appearance in the hearts of those whom he chooseth, in any age or generation. The Lord hath been pleased to bring us (a poor despised remnant) back to that which first gave us life, in the days of our former profession. Oh that ye were brought thither also, that that might remove the veil, hardness, darkness, and deep prejudices from you; which can never be removed while ye stick in literal apprehensions, without the light and teachings of God's Spirit! Now as touching the outward, which ye say we deny, because of out testimony to the inward, I have frequently given a most solemn testimony thereto; and God knoweth it to be the truth of my heart; and that the testifying to the inward, from which the outward came, doth not make the outward void, but rather establish it in its place and service. God himself, who knew what virtue was in the inward, yet hath pleased to make use of the outward; and who may contradict or slight his wisdom and counsel therein? Glorious was the appearance and manifestation of his Son in flesh; precious his subjection and holy obedience to his Father; his giving himself up to death for sinners was of great esteem in his eye! It was a spotless sacrifice of great value, and effectual for the remission of sins; and I do acknowledge humbly unto the Lord the remission of my sins thereby, and bless the Lord for it; even for giving up his Son to death for us all, and giving all that believe in his name and power to partake of remission through him.

And seeing it is thus with me, seeing the root of the matter is in me, oh, how can any man, that hopes to be redeemed by my Lord and Saviour, reproach me for speaking of the mystery, without the least derogation to the outward, or what was done by him in the outward! But if I should speak vehemently concerning men's neglecting the

mystery, and setting up that which is outward instead of it, I should not be condemned, but justified of the Lord in so doing. Indeed there is a great and weighty charge from God's Spirit upon the professors of this age, for departing from the inward (I mean that sweet sense, which, in some measure, God gave them in former times of the inward), and magnifying and striving to establish that which they apprehend concerning the outward, without it, and against it. Oh that it were otherwise with them, that God may not have this charge to manage against them, when at the great day they are to appear before him, and be judged by him! When all that have slighted or spoken contemptuously of his Son's appearance in flesh, and have not come to a sense thereof, and repentance for it, shall be condemned; and they that have slighted or spoken contemptuously of his appearance in Spirit, shall not be justified: which appearance is now made manifest in the hearts of many, blessed be the Lord for it! Oh, what cries have been in my heart many years concerning you, O ye professors of all sorts who have had any tenderness towards the Lord! that ye might see and know the Lord Christ; and confess him in Spirit, in the mystery, even in his inward appearance in the heart, and might feel his redeeming power and virtue there, and so be brought into union and fellowship with him!

The Conclusion of the First Part.

There is a precious promise of God's making a feast of fat things on his holy mountain, and of destroying there the face of the covering, cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. Isaiah xxv. 6, 7. Now, what is this mountain? Was there not a Mount Zion under the law, which was figurative? and is there not a Mount Zion under the gospel, which is the substance of that figure? and did not the Christians in the apostles' days, who were called of God and sanctified, come to this Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where they

had fellowship with God the Judge of all, and with Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, &c.? Heb. xii. 22, 24. And was not the veil here done away in him who was their Lord, their light, their life, their strength, their sun of righteousness, their bright and morning star? so that with open face they could behold the glory of the Lord, and were changed thereby into his heavenly image, from glory to glory. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

But alas, how hath that life, Spirit, and power been lost, since the days of the apostles! Men have still owned the apostles' words, and formed many notions and apprehensions out of the letter, but lost the apostles' spirit, lost the knowledge of the holy mountain, where the veil is taken away, and where the feast of fat things is made; and so are only dreaming about eating and drinking spiritually, but know not what it is to feed on the living substance. And so (being ignorant of that) the veil is over their hearts while they read the prophets' words, and Christ's and his apostles' words; and the mystery of life, and of the redeeming power, is hid from their eyes: and that which God intended to them for a table, is become their snare (as it was with the Jews); and their back is so bowed down under the loads and burdens of the enemy, that they cannot so much as hope or believe in the power of life for redemption therefrom, but conclude it must necessarily be so with them all their days.

Oh! where is the faith that gives victory over the enemies? Where is the ability in the faith, so to resist him as to make him fly? Where is Satan's falling like lightning (Oh, his strength before the power of the Lord is but a flash!), and the God of peace his treading him under the feet of his saints? Oh! where is that truth, or that knowledge of the Son, which makes free from him? (John viii. 32, 36.) Where is that Spirit wherein liberty from his power and snares is felt? 2 Cor. iii. 17. Where is living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, and in the pure light of the Lord, where he cannot come? Where is reading of the Scriptures

in that which gives to witness them, and which fulfils them in the heart?

Oh, the mystery of godliness, the power of godliness, where the life is revealed, and the veil taken away, and an understanding given, opened, and kept open, to read and understand the Scriptures aright; yea, and the hidden glory also! Where it cannot be said in truth to those that are there, Ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God; but, Ye have received power to become sons of God, and ye are in him that is true; who truly opens the Scriptures in your hearts, and gives you the enjoyment, inheritance, and possession of the precious promises, whereby ye are made partakers of the divine nature, and live in him who is the head and spring of that nature. Oh that people that profess Christ were here! Oh that they did know him who begets! and then they would not be so ignorant of those that are begotten by him; but would come into the true faith, into the true love, into the true knowledge and obedience of him, whom God hath appointed to guide and govern, and build up the whole living body. The Lord guide me inwardly thither, where the mystery is revealed, and the fellowship with God, and his Son and saints, held in the mystery! For our fellowship is not in a notional knowledge concerning Christ, but in the life itself; which the Lord God gather his people more and more into, and build them more and more up in. Amen.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT CONCERNING THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS.

We are a people of God's gathering, who (many of us) had long waited for his Appearance, and had undergone great Distress for want thereof.

Quest. But some say, What appearance of the great God and Saviour did ye want?

Ans. We wanted the presence and power of his Spirit to

be inwardly manifested in our spirits. We had (as I may say) what we could gather from the letter, and endeavoured to practise what we could read in the letter; but we wanted the power from on high, we wanted life, we wanted the presence and fellowship of our beloved; we wanted the knowledge of the heavenly seed and kingdom, and an entrance into it, and the holy dominion and reign of the Lord of life over the flesh, over sin and death in us.

Quest. How did God appear to you?

Ans. The Sun of righteousness did arise in us, the day spring from on high, the morning-star did visit us, insomuch that we did as really see and feel the light and brightness of the inward day in our spirits, as ever we felt the darkness of the inward night.

Quest. How did God gather you?

Ans. By the voice of his Son, by the arm of his Son, by the virtue of his Son's light and life inwardly revealed and working in our hearts. This loosed us inwardly from the darkness, from the bonds of sin and iniquity, from the power of the captiver and destroyer, and turned our minds inwardly towards our Lord and Saviour, to mind his inward appearance, his inward shinings, his inward quickenings; all which were fresh from God, and full of virtue. And as we came to be sensible of them, join to them, receive and give up to them, we came to partake of their virtue, and to witness the rescuing and redeeming of our souls thereby. So that by hearing the Son's voice, and following him, we came to find him the way to the Father, and to be gathered home by him to the Father's house, where is bread enough, and mansions of rest and peace for all the children of the Most High.

Now as touching the blessed principle of truth, which we have had experience of, and testify to (for how can we conceal so rich a treasure, and be faithful to God, or bear true good-will to men!), it is no new thing in itself, though of late more clearly revealed, and the minds of men more clearly directed and guided to it, than in former ages. It is no other than that which Christ himself abundantly

preached, who preached the kingdom, who preached the truth which makes free, and that under many parables and resemblances; sometimes of a little seed, sometimes of a pearl or hid treasure, sometimes of a leaven or salt, sometimes of a lost piece of silver, &c. Now what is this, and where is this to be found? What is this which is like a little seed, a pearl, &c., and where is it to be found? What is the field? Is it not the world, and is not the world set in man's heart? What is the house which is to be swept, and the candle lighted in? Is it not that house, or heart, where the many enemies are? A man's enemies, saith Christ, are those of his own house. Indeed the testimony concerning this was precious to us; but the finding and experiencing the thing testified of to be according to the testimony, was much more. And this we say in perfect truth of heart, and in most tender love to the souls of people, that whoever tries, shall find this little thing, this little seed of the kingdom, to be a kingdom, to be a pearl, to be heavenly treasure, to be the leaven of life, leavening the heart with life, and with the most precious oil and ointment of healing and salvation. So that we testify to no new thing, but to the truth and grace which was from the beginning; which was always in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and dispensed by him in all ages and generations, whereby he quickened, renewed, and changed the heart of the true believers in his inward and spiritual appearance in them, thereby destroying the enemies of their own house, and saving them from them. For indeed there is no saving the creature, without destroying that in the creature, which brings spiritual death and destruction upon it. Israel of old was saved by the destroying of their outward enemies; and Israel now (the new Israel, the inward Israel) is saved by the destruction of their inward enemies. Oh! that people could come out of their own wisdom, and wait for God's wisdom, that in it they might come to see the glory, the excellency, the exceeding rich virtue and treasures of life, that are wrapped up in this principle or seed of life;

and so might receive it, give up to it, and come to partake thereof.

And as touching doctrines, we have no new doctrines to hold forth. The doctrines held forth in the holy Scriptures are the doctrines that we believe. And this doth further seal to us our belief of this principle, because we find it a key by which God openeth the Scriptures to us, and giveth us the living sense and evidence of them in our hearts. We see, and have felt in it to whom the curse and wrath belong; and to whom the love, mercy, peace, blessings, and precious promises belong; and have been led by God's Holy Spirit and power through the judgments to the mercy, and to the partaking of the precious promises. So that what should we publish any new faith, or any new doctrines for? Indeed we have none to publish; but all our aim is to bring men to the ancient principle of truth, and to the right understanding and practice of the ancient, apostolic doctrine and holy faith once delivered to the saints. Head notions do but cause disputes; but heart knowledge, heart experience, sense of the living power of God inwardly, the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit in the inward parts, puts an end to disputes, and puts men upon the inward travel and exercise of spirit by that which is new and living, which avails with God. Now whereas many are offended at us, because we do not more preach doctrinal points, or the history of Christ, as touching his death, resurrection, ascension, &c.; but our declaration and testimony is chiefly concerning a principle, to direct and guide men's minds thereto; to give a plain account of this thing, as it pleaseth the Lord to open my heart at this time in love and good will to satisfy and remove prejudices where it may be; thus it is in brief:

First, That which God hath given us the experience of (after our great loss in the literal knowledge of things), and that which he hath given us to testify of, is the mystery, the hidden life, the inward and spiritual appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, revealing his power inwardly, destroying enemies inwardly, and working his work

inwardly in the heart. Oh, this was the joyful sound to our souls, even the tidings of the arising of that inward life and power which could do this! Now this spiritual appearance of his was after his appearance in the flesh, and is the standing and lasting dispensation of the gospel, even the appearance of Christ in his Spirit and power inwardly in the hearts of his. So that in minding this, and being faithful in this respect, we mind our peculiar work, and are faithful in that which God hath peculiarly called us to, and requireth of us.

Secondly, There is not that need of publishing the other as formerly was. The historical relation concerning Christ is generally believed and received by all sorts that pretend to Christianity. His death, his miracles, his rising, his ascending, his interceding, &c. is generally believed by all people; but the mystery they miss of, the hidden life they are not acquainted with, but alienated from the life of God, in the midst of their literal owning and acknowledging of these things.

Thirdly, The knowledge of these, without the knowledge of the mystery, is not sufficient to bring them unto God; for many set up that which they gather and comprehend from the relation concerning the thing, instead of the thing itself, and so never come to a sense of their need of the thing itself, nay, not so far as rightly to seek after it. And so many are builders, and many are built up very high in religion, in a way of notion and practice, without acquaintance with the rock of ages, without the true knowledge and understanding of the foundation and corner-stone. My meaning is, they have a notion of Christ to be the rock, a notion of him to be the foundation-stone; but never come livingly to feel him the rock, to feel him the foundation-stone, inwardly laid in their hearts, and themselves made living stones in him, and built upon him, the main and fundamental stone. Where is this to be felt but within? And they that feel this within, do they not feel Christ within? And can any that feel him within, deny him to be within, the strength of life, the hope of glory? Well, it is true once again (spiritually now, as well as formerly literally) "the

stone which the builders refused" (Christ within, the builders of this age refuse) "is become the head of the corner," who knits together his sanctified body, his living body, the church, in this our day, more gloriously than in the former ages and generations, blessed be the name of our God.

Fourthly, The mystery, the hidden life, the appearance of Christ in Spirit, comprehends the other: and the other is not lost or denied, but found in it, and there discerned or acknowledged more clearly and abundantly. It was to be after it, and comprehends that which went before it. Paul did not lose any thing of the excellent knowledge of Christ, when he said, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more." If he did not know Christ after the flesh, how did he know him? Why, as the Father inwardly revealed him. He knew him in his Spirit and power. He knew his death inwardly, he knew his resurrection inwardly, he knew the Spirit, the virtue, the power of it inwardly; he knew the thing in the mystery in his own heart. Oh, precious knowledge! Oh, the excellency of this knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! What is the outwardly most exact literal knowledge without this? But what then? Do I now deny or slight the outward? No; I have it here, and I have the inward feeling of the Spirit of life, how it dwelt in him, how it wrought in him, and of what wonderful value all his actions and obedience were, in and through the virtue of this Spirit. Was Abraham's offering his son so precious in God's eye? Oh, then what is this! Never was such a body so sanctified, so prepared; never such a sacrifice offered. Oh, the infinite worth and value of it! For by the inward life and teachings of God's Spirit, am I taught and made able to value that glorious outward appearance and manifestation of the life and power of God in that heavenly flesh (as in my heart I have often called it), for the life so dwelt in it, that it was even one with it. Yet still it was a veil, and the mystery was the thing; and the eye of life looks through the veil into the mystery, and passes through it, as I may say,

as to the outward, that it may behold its glory in the inward. And here the flesh of Christ, the veil, is not lost, but is found and known in its glory in the inward. Be not offended at me, O tender-hearted reader! for I write in love things true, according to the inward feeling and demonstration of God's Spirit, though not easy perhaps to be understood at present by thee; but in due time the Lord can make them manifest to thee, if thou in uprightness and tenderness of heart, and in the silence of the fleshly part, wait upon him.

A few words concerning the Way of Peace.

"The way of peace they have not known." Rom. iii. 17.

There is a way of peace, of true peace with God, who is an adversary to all that is unholy and unrighteous. Those who have been unholy and unrighteous, who have been awakened, troubled, and could find no rest, but the severe and righteous judgments and wrath of the Lord lying upon their spirits night and day, having at length had their ears opened by him, and being led by him out of the unholy and unrighteous way, into the holy and righteous way, have felt both life and peace therein.

Now, there are two sorts which the apostle here mentions (or two states, which the apostle here speaks of), which have not known, nor can know, the way of peace with God, who is an adversary to them both, and will one day speak trouble to them both, when their souls and consciences come to be searched and judged by him.

The one is the profane, or Gentile state, which is without the sense of God, not heeding any appearance of his, or any inward voice of his Spirit, or the writing of his law upon their heart. These never knew the way wherein the heart is inwardly and spiritually circumcised and renewed, sin forgiven, and peace obtained.

The other is the professing or outward Jew's state, who may study the letter, and apply themselves to conform out-

wardly to the letter, but never were acquainted with the inward Spirit and power. These greatly differ from the Gentile or profane state, both in outward appearance, and in their own eye; but are the same in the ground with the Gentiles, and know no more of the way of peace than the other do.

Quest. But what is the way of peace, which neither the profane, nor any sort of professors out of the life and power, ever knew, or can know?

Ans. It is an inward way, a way for the inward Jews, for the inwardly renewed and circumcised to walk in. It is a holy or sanctified way, for the sanctified ones to walk in. It is a living way, which none but the living can find. It is a new way, which none but those to whom God hath given the new eye can see. It is a way that God prepares and casts up, and leads men's spirits into (who hearken unto him), and guides the feet of his saints in. It is a strait and narrow way, which no lust of the flesh, nor wisdom of the flesh can find out, or enter into. Oh, how little, how low, how poor, how empty, how naked, must he be, that enters into this way, and walks therein! Many may seek after it, and may think to find it, and walk in it; but few shall be able, as our Lord Christ said. Here circumcision outward avails not; here want of that circumcision hinders not; here bodily exercise profits little. The new creature is all here; the cross of Christ is all here; the power of God is all here; and he that walks according to this rule, peace is upon him, and the whole Israel of God. But he that knows not this rule, nor walks according to this rule, peace is not upon him, nor is he one of the inward Israel of God, who receive power to become sons, who receive the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is the inward rule of the inward Israel.

This was the way of peace from the beginning; this is the way of peace still; and there is not another. To be new created in Christ Jesus, to be ingrafted into him, to abide in him, to have the circumcision of the flesh (the body of the sins of the flesh cut off) by the circumcision of Christ

(made inwardly in the heart without hands), and to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, even in the newness of the Spirit, here is life and peace, rest and joy for evermore. The Lord of his tender mercy give men a sense of it, and lead men into it more and more. Amen.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE.

THERE is a birth which is born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John i. 13. And this birth, which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. chap. iii. 6. Now this birth, which is born of the Spirit, and is Spirit, hath a life and way of knowledge suitable to its nature and being; which is very far above man. Its life is in the Spirit, and its walking in the Spirit, and its knowledge is after the way of the Spirit, very far above man's way of conceiving or comprehending. The birth itself is a mystery to man, and its way of knowing is a way altogether hid from man. It is indeed in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, in the shinings of his light in the heart: "In thy light shall we see light." The birth knows what this means. There is a wise and prudent part in man, from which God hides the sight of his kingdom, and the heavenly glory thereof; but there is a babe to which God reveals the mystery thereof. Flesh and blood cannot reveal; but the Father can and doth to his children, who is the teacher of them all, from the least to the greatest, in the new and living covenant. There is man's day, and there is God's day. There is man's day of gathering knowledge, after his fleshly manner of comprehending; and there is God's day of giving knowledge, by the shinings of the light of his own eternal Spirit. In man's day, how doth wise and prudent man beat his brains, and labor in the fire for very vanity! But in God's day, how doth the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea! When

the day-spring from on high visits inwardly, when the Lord lighteth the candle inwardly, oh, how clear is the knowledge of the Lord, and how doth it abound then! Oh, what a difference there is between man's apprehensions and conceivings concerning Christ, and God's revealing him inwardly; and between man's coming to Christ according to his own apprehensions, and his coming to Christ in the heavenly drawings and teachings of the Father! John vi. 45. Oh that the begettings of life and the birth thereof were felt in men's hearts, that in it men might know the day of God, and the kingdom of God, and the treasures of wisdom which are hid in Christ, and will ever be so, but as Christ is inwardly revealed and formed in the heart! Many may have notions of Christ being formed in them: ah! but to feel it inwardly! there is the sweetness, there is the assurance, there is the life, there is the peace, there is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is the joy of the true Christian for ever. Come, oh! come, all sorts of tender professors, out of yourselves, into God's Spirit, into God's truth, that ye may know what it is to be in the Spirit, and in the truth, and what it is to live there, and to know things there, and to worship there, and to have fellowship with the Father and Son there. The poor receive the gospel, the poor receive the kingdom, the poor receive the power, the poor receive the righteousness and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ye are too rich in your comprehensions and gathered knowledge from your own literal conceivings, to learn to wait aright, to receive of him his gold, his raiment, and his eye-salve. What pleasure is it to us to testify against you? Were it not for obedience to our God, and love to your souls, we would never do it. We are content and satisfied to be of the little, despised flock, which the Shepherd feeds, giving to every one his proportion of daily nourishment, life, peace, righteousness, and joy. It is our love to you that we would not have you lay out your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which will not satisfy the truly hungry and awakened soul, but might come to feed on substance, on the life itself, on the

sweetness and fatness of God's house, where nothing that any of his children can need or long after is wanting. Oh that ye had the sense of our love! If ye had the true understanding and sense of God's love, ye could not but have a sense of our love also; for it comes from him, and it flows towards you in his will and tender movings. Do ye love God? Are your hearts circumcised to love God? If not, ye do not truly love. And if ye loved him that begets, ye would love them that are begotten by him. Your love is to your own notions and apprehensions of God, not to his nature; for if ye loved his nature (that holy, heavenly, spiritual nature as it is in him), ye could not but love it in his children also. Well, our God is love, and taught us to love even our enemies, and to wrestle with our God for them, that, if it be possible, the Lord may remove the scales from their eyes, and give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus, where it is more living and powerful, more effectual and operative (inwardly purifying, sanctifying, yea, and justifying also), than any but those only that are born of God, and kept alive by him, yet ever knew, or can know.

POSTSCRIPT.

Containing a few Words concerning the Doings and Sufferings of that despised People called Quakers, which are both misunderstood and misrepresented by many: with an Exhortation to true Christianity.

First, their doings are looked upon by many to be from a natural principle, and according to the covenant of works, and not from the free grace and gift of God's Spirit.

Now concerning this I can speak somewhat faithfully, as having been long experienced in the principle, and as having had experience of the grace and tender mercy of the Lord from my childhood. And indeed thus it hath been

with me from my childhood; whatever hath been done in me, or by me, that was good, I have felt to be from God's grace and mercy to me, and have cried grace, grace, mercy, mercy, to the Lord continually therefor. And when I was turned to his truth in the inward parts, I found it was God's grace and tender love to me to turn me to it, and to preserve me, being turned; and to cause it to spring in me day by day, and to give me ability through it. Ah! none knows, but they that have had experience, how we have been weakened in the natural part; how poor we have been made, that we might receive the gospel, and how poor in ourselves we are kept, that we might enjoy the riches and inheritance of the kingdom. And this we daily experience, that not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, and doth daily save us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Yea, God's writing his law in our hearts, and placing his fear there, and putting his Spirit within us, to enlighten and quicken, and cause us to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and to do them, and all the mortifying of sin, and denying of the lusts of the flesh, and performing that which is holy and acceptable in the eyes of the Lord (as all that proceeds from his own Holy Spirit is),—all this is of the new covenant, and performed by the working thereof, and not by the working of the natural part of itself, but by the working of the Spirit of life in the new birth, and through the natural part as his instrument. So let none reproach the works that God brings forth in us, who hath created us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, lest thereby he reproach the Holy Spirit and power of the living God, in which they are wrought, and by which they are brought forth, and could never be brought forth without it.

Then for our sufferings, indeed they are gifts we receive from God; so that we can truly say, it is given us by the Lord our God not only to believe in his Son, but to suffer for his sake; and that it is only in good conscience to God, and by the assistance of the Lord, that we suffer; that the

patience and meekness wherewith we suffer, is not of ourselves, but of him. Whenever the Lord permits afflictions or sufferings to come upon us, our eye is to him, and we enter into them in his fear, knowing our own inability to go through them, and looking up to him for strength. And when we are in them, while they continue, we daily look up to him for strength, and have been, many times, very weak in ourselves, when immediately or very soon after, we have felt great strength in the Lord. Also after our sufferings, when the Lord hath been with us all along, and brought us through our sufferings in the peace and joy of his Spirit, we do not look back boastingly, as if we had been any thing, or done any thing as of ourselves; but we bow before the Lord, and bless the Lord, when we consider how he hath been with us, and how he hath upheld us by the right-hand of his righteousness; and what he hath done for us when we were very poor, weak, afflicted, and often sorely distressed. Therefore let none reproach, misrepresent, or vilify our sufferings, which our God hath helped us through, and for which we, in humility of heart, give him thanks, and cannot but do so all our days, because the thankful remembrance and sense of them is written by the finger of his Spirit upon our hearts. Oh! all sorts of people, whom we love and travail for, and use our interest in the Lord our God for, that ye might be truly sensible of your conditions, know the inward appearance and visits of the Shepherd and Saviour of the soul, turn to him (looking in true faith unto him), and be saved! I say unto you, in tenderness of spirit, oh! do not requite us so ill for our love and truth of heart towards you, as to cast untrue and unjust reproaches upon us, and to render that truth vile which God hath made honorable, in sanctifying and redeeming many thereby. Truly our love is from the God of love. We could not so love you as we do, if our God had not taught us; nor so seek after you as we do, in tenderness of bowels, if we were not instruments in the hand of the Shepherd of Israel. And the light we testify of, which we feel shine in us, it is no less than the true, sure light of the Sun of right-

eousness, which God hath caused to shine in our hearts; who also loveth mankind, and causeth it to glance into the darkest corners of the earth. And the life we are quickened by out of sin and transgression, and the power we have received to become sons of God,—it is from him who is the fountain of life, and hath all power in heaven and earth. Oh that ye could receive the blessed report! Oh that the arm of the Lord might be revealed in you! Oh that ye could feel and witness the Saviour working out your salvation in you, binding the strong man in you, casting him out of you, with all his goods after him, that the place of the wicked one might be found no more in you, nor none of his lusts or vain thoughts lodge in your hearts any more; but ye might witness and experience the new heart, the clean heart, the pure heart, in which God dwells, and the eye that sees him that is invisible. Oh! glory to the Lord for what he hath done in and for a despised people (who were no people before the Lord made them one), who hath brought them to Zion, his holy mountain, where he dwells and reigns, and where he builds up his own house and temple, which he establisheth over all; where the sheep of Israel feed, and where the Shepherd of Israel reigns and triumphs in glory over the enemies of his kingdom. The little, innocent babes taste somewhat of his holy dominion and power, and of his kingdom of peace and righteousness; but in his ancients his light shines very brightly, and before them he reigneth gloriously; so that he is praised in the very heights of Zion, and his name renowned there over all for ever. Glory, glory to the pure spring of life, from whence the living streams come, which refresh the souls of the living. Surely his pure praises shall be sounded in the hearts of the living for ever and ever. Amen.

An Exhortation to true Christianity.

It is easy to pretend to Christ; but to be a true Christian is very precious, and many Tribulations and deep Afflictions are to be passed through before it be attained unto, as those who are made so by the Lord experience.

Now everlasting happiness and salvation depends upon true Christianity. Not upon having the name of a Christian only, or professing such or such Christian doctrines; but upon having the nature of Christianity, upon being renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and receiving the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. Oh, here is the Christian indeed! and it should be every one's care not to fall short of this. Now because there is a contention about Christianity, who is the right Christian, it behooves every man to take care as to himself that he be really such; that he receive that from God, and be that to God, which none but the right Christian can be, or can receive. This is the use I would make of these things in my own heart, even to be sure I be such a one as God hath made, and will accept and own as a Christian. And having had some experience of this thing, and truly understanding what the Christian state is, and what doth attend it, I shall set down some few things, which he that inwardly knoweth, witnesseth, and enjoyeth, is without all controversy a true Christian, whatever men may account of him.

First, He that is a new creature, is without doubt a true Christian. He that is regenerated, he that is renewed in the spirit of his mind by Christ Jesus, he that is new created in the holy and heavenly image, he has felt the power of God's Spirit begetting him anew, forming him anew, out of the old nature and image of the first Adam, into the nature and image of the second Adam, who is the quickening Spirit, and that which is begotten and born of him is Spirit.

Secondly, He that is in the new covenant is a true Christian. He that hath thirsted after the living waters, and hath

heard the call to the waters of life, hath heard the voice of him who gives life, and hath received life from him, who giveth life to all that come to him, and who maketh the new and everlasting covenant with all that hear his voice, take up his cross and follow him, he is without doubt one of Christ's sheep, whom the Shepherd owneth, and taketh care of.

Thirdly, He that is inwardly circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, he is a Jew inward, a Christian inward (in the sight of God), who hath felt the Spirit and power of Christ Jesus, and rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and is one of those worshippers whom God hath sought out, and taught to worship him in the life and Spirit of his Son.

Fourthly, He that is inwardly washed with clean water, with the inward water, he is the inward Jew, the inward Christian. God promised to pour out clean water upon his Israel, and they should be clean. He who hath the clean water poured upon him inwardly, which inwardly washeth and cleanseth, he is without controversy one of God's inward Israel.

Fifthly, He that feeds on the bread of life within, and drinks the water of life out of his own well or cistern, he without doubt is living. He that is invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and comes and sups with the Lamb, he is one of the same nature and spirit with him. He with whom Christ sups, who hath heard Christ knocking at his door, hath opened to him, and received him in, to purify his heart, and dwell in him, and sup with him, and give him to sup with himself; so that he eats bread in the kingdom, and drinks wine in the kingdom, and partakes of the feast of fat things, which God makes to his Israel in his holy mountain, he is without doubt one of Christ's, and partakes of this in and through him.

Sixthly, He that lives the Christian life, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; who doth not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but hath the law of God written in his heart, and his fear put within him, and his Holy Spirit given to instruct him, and to guide him to answer the holy

law written in his heart, which the carnal mind is not subject to, nor can be subject to, without doubt he is spiritual; without doubt he is a true Christian.

Seventhly, He that lives by faith, who knows the faith which is the gift of God, hath received it, and lives by it; who can do nothing of himself, but only by faith in that holy power which doth all in him; so that he lives, and believes, and obeys from a holy root of life, which causeth life to spring up in him, and love to spring up in him, and the Lamb's meekness and patience to spring up in him, and all grace to spring up in him,—I say, he that lives thus, without doubt is ingrafted into the true vine, into the true olive-tree; and the root bears him, and ministers sap unto him, and he is a true, fresh, green, living branch of the true vine, of the holy olive-tree.

Many more things might be mentioned, as they are experimentally known and felt among us, who are true Christians; though the Baptists and others have represented us to the world as if we were no Christians; but that touching us not, their saying so is no more to us than the professing Jews of the same spirit, who said Christ had a devil. But these are to give a taste; and he that knows and feels these may also know and feel the rest, and he that doth not know or feel these would not know or feel the rest, if ever so many more should be mentioned. Now the way to feel these, and to become a true Christian (and to grow up in the Christian life), is to feel the seed of the kingdom, which is the beginning of the kingdom, the beginning of true Christianity; and then to feel the seed abiding (the seed which is of the Spirit, and which is Spirit), here is the constant seal of Christianity in my heart; here are true and certain evidences, day by day, of the Christian nature and spirit manifesting themselves undeniably inwardly.

And now having the witness in myself, the testimony of him that begat life in me, testifying to his own work, and to his own birth, of what value are any testimonies of men without, against this? Christianity is a mystery, and he only can truly see who is a Christian indeed, who hath the inward eye

opened, and with that inward eye is taught of God to pierce into that wherein Christianity consisteth. There have been many Christians of men's making; there are also some Christians of God's and Christ's making; which Christians God and Christ will own, but not the other. Oh! let men have a care, that when God cometh to distinguish between cattle and cattle (between Christian and Christian), they be found such as God will make up as his jewels, and own as the sheep of his fold; such as shall be able to bear the trial of his searching judgment, and pure, impartial eye; and not such as still, notwithstanding all their profession of religion and Christianity, are found workers of iniquity, and so not created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, and therefore not truly of him, nor true Christians in his eye.

TO THE

JEWS NATURAL,

AND

TO THE JEWS SPIRITUAL;

WITH

A FEW WORDS TO ENGLAND, MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

WHEREUNTO ARE ADDED

THREE QUERIES TOUCHING THE RIVER AND CITY OF GOD,
AND THE PURE STILLNESS WHEREIN GOD
IS KNOWN AND EXALTED.

AS ALSO

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED
CONCERNING THE TRUE CHURCH, MINISTRY, AND MAINTENANCE
UNDER THE GOSPEL;

AND LIKEWISE ABOUT THE LAMB'S WAR.

Written in travailing bowels, by

ISAAC PENINGTON.

"Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are of a clean heart." Ps. lxxiii. 1.

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." John i. 47.

"For he is not a Jew that is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii. 28, 29.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised, with the uncircumcised, Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners that dwell in the wilderness; for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." Jer. ix. 25, 26.

PREFACE.

WHAT a day of distress, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, is to come upon the wicked and ungodly world (even upon man, who was created in the image of God, but is now fallen from it, and found out of it, and in another image very unlike it); the eye which the god of this world hath blinded, and the heart which he hath hardened by sin and transgression, hath no sense of.

What a day of distress and misery some in this nation (and in other parts of the world) have already met with! how they have felt the weight of sin upon their spirits, and what a sore thing it hath been to them to feel their souls separated from that God that made them (who is the Husband and Father, King and Preserver of souls that are found in his image and nature); how they have been inwardly captivated by a foreign power, and oppressed, and made to serve under sin, and could hear no effectual tidings of his appearance who was able to save, but their spirits were ready to sink, and their hope of redemption, from that which oppressed and captivated them, almost cut off,—this being an inward state and condition, hath been altogether hid from the eye which is outward.

How the Lord at length appeared unto these (his bowels having long rolled over them, and he having long waited to be gracious to them, even till the full and acceptable set time was come); how his light hath shined in and upon them; how he gathered those dry bones together, and breathed life into them, and made them live,—this also is altogether a hidden thing from the eye of the world.

How the Lord, who appeared to them, hath exercised and tried them; how he hath judged them, and how he hath saved them; what desolations he hath made inwardly in them, and what he hath built there, what a hammer, a

sword, a fire, &c. his pure word of life hath been in them; how that birth which could live without God, without his inward life, or upon words and knowledge without life, hath been famished, until, by the pain of the famine, its very life and breath hath been taken from it, and it crucified with Christ, by the pain of the cross of Christ; and what birth hath been raised and crowned afterwards, and beautified with the ornaments of righteousness and salvation, yea, with the endless love and mercy with its God; and how the Lord is with his people, and dwells and walks in them, and how he hath humbled them to walk with him; and how in fear and humility they do walk with him in the light of day everlasting, even as God is light, and walks in the light of his own day,—these are very strange and unknown things to the wisest and most prudent in religion at this day, who are not gathered into the mystery of godliness (nor into the Spirit, power, and glory of the Father), where these things are revealed in and by the Son.

What faith the children of wisdom have in the wisdom and power which hath appeared; what confidence they have in the Lord their God, that he will stand by them in all their exercises and trials, both inward and outward; and what experiences they have had of the Lord's standing by them in both; how his faithfulness doth not fail; and how their faith in him is upheld and preserved by him, that it doth not fail in the stormy time, or hour of great distress; and how their eye is unto him, and their hearts with him in the calms, so that their God is all in all unto them continually,—(and who knows this but they that have it!) Oh, who can utter or declare the sweetness and certainty of this, where it is enjoyed!

What love also the Lord sheds abroad in their hearts; and how he teacheth and causeth them to love, by often circumcising their hearts, and cutting off that which hindereth the pure love from springing in them; and how they love others, in the love wherewith God (who is love) hath loved them; and how natural it is to them to pray for their enemies, and to bless them that curse them, and do good for

evil; but cannot requite evil for evil, being transplanted into, and growing up in, the root that is good; and sends up good sap and virtue into them, which nourisheth all that is good in them, but is death and destruction to the remainders of evil, as the Lord pursueth and findeth it out,—oh, how impossible is it for the heart of man to conceive and understand!

Now I also having tasted of the mercy and goodness of the Lord, and having been brought out of a state of great misery and sorrow of heart, into the redemption and joy of God's chosen; and having found the Lord faithful to me, and giving me faith in the appearance of his Spirit and power in me, and true love (tender love), not only to my brethren in the truth, but to all mankind, springing in me, and divers fruits issuing forth from it; some of them at this time I cannot but publish, and the Lord open the hearts of those whom it concerns, that they may find some help, benefit, and furtherance by it. For it is the joy of my heart to receive good from God; to be filled with his blessings, to have my cup overflow; and that others may be helped, refreshed, and gladded therewith, and, by the sweet taste thereof, led to wait for the opening of the same root and fountain of life in themselves, to yield living sap, and send forth living streams in them day by day.

TO THE JEWS NATURAL,

AND TO THE

JEWS SPIRITUAL.

SOMEWHAT IN THE LOVE OF GOD TO THE JEWS NATURAL, OR SEED OF ABRAHAM AFTER THE FLESH.

Oh, the glory of your state outward, who were the people whom God once chose and loved, and manifested his power and presence among, above all people! whose land was the glory of all lands, to which God brought you out of Egypt by an outstretched arm, through a dreadful wilderness, wherein ye were tempted, tried, and exercised, and the succeeding generation fitted to enter into. Oh, what laws and statutes, and righteous judgments, did God give you, such as no nation besides had! What a temple had ye to appear before God in, and the ark of the covenant, and holy priests, kings, and prophets! and how nigh was God to you, to be inquired of by you; and how ready to hear your prayers, in all that you called upon him for! The eternal God was thy refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms (the Lord was thy rock, and thou wast built upon him); and he did thrust out the enemy before thee, and did say, Destroy. And when the arm of the Lord did destroy them before thee, thou didst dwell in safety alone; and the Lord was a fountain of living waters to thee, and his heavens did drop down fatness upon thee. Happy wast thou, O Israel! who was like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord! the shield of thy help, and who was the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies were found liars unto thee, and thou didst tread upon their high places. And it might have been still so with thee, hadst thou not been unmindful of the rock

that begat thee, and forgotten God that formed thee. For thy glory should not have been taken from thee, but swallowed up in a higher glory, wherein thou mightest have had the first and chiefest share, hadst thou not, by thy almost constant rebellion and unbelief, provoked the Lord against thee; not only often to afflict, but at last utterly to cast thee off from being a people, and to choose a people in thy stead, who should bring forth better fruits to the Lord of the vineyard, than thou in thy day hadst done.

Yet when thy state was thus glorious, it was not a state of the truly substantial, lasting glory, but a shadowy state or representative thereof. Thy day of glory was not the day of the Messiah, the day of everlasting light inwardly, wherein the Lord alone is exalted inwardly in the hearts of all, in whom he breaks down all that is contrary to the light of his day. Thy day was but the day of the outward shadows of the heavenly substance; but when that day (the day of the inward substance and glory) shined, thy shadows or shadowy state was to fly away, and to be swallowed up in the pure substance and spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

Thy birth from Abraham after the flesh was not the birth which was to inherit the promise in the kingdom of the Messiah; but there is a birth inwardly born of the Spirit, born after Abraham in his faith, who travels inwardly, as Abraham did outwardly, and seeks an inward country and city, whose builder and maker is God: to these the spiritual kingdom and promises belong.

Thy circumcision was but the circumcision outward, the circumcision of the flesh; it was not the circumcision of the heart: that is the circumcision of the inward Jew, which indeed the scripture calleth for from you, because there was somewhat near you, which would have so circumcised you, had ye hearkened and given up to it. But ye, as a people, were not so circumcised, but were a stiff-necked people (as Moses and the prophets were still complaining of you) uncircumcised in heart and ears, resisting God's Spirit both in your own hearts and in the prophets, until the Lord was provoked to take away both vision and prophet from you.

The Egypt in which your fathers were in bondage, and Pharaoh who oppressed them, was but the Egypt outward, and Pharaoh outward. There is an inward Egypt, wherein the spiritual seed, the inward man, the soul, is in bondage; and there is a spiritual Pharaoh, that oppresseth the spiritual seed, in spiritual Egypt: and there is a stretching out the arm of the Almighty inwardly, to break the strength of the inward Pharaoh, to pierce Leviathan the crooked serpent, and to deliver the soul from under his captivity.

The wilderness also your fathers were led through, was but the outward wilderness, where they were tempted and tried by the Lord many ways, that he might do them good in the latter end. But the inward Israel, after they are led out of the inward Egypt, are tried in the inward wilderness; where they are judged after the flesh, and that wasted in them, which is not to enter into and inherit the good land, where they are tried in the furnace of affliction, and their filth purged away by the spirit of judgment and burning; that the righteous nation, which hath received the holy inward law, and keeps the truth, may enter into the good land, city, and kingdom of the Messiah, and inherit the blessed promises of life and salvation there.

Moses, your great prophet, was a type of the great, lasting, standing prophet, whom God would raise up like unto Moses, who was to give his inward law as Moses did the outward, and to lead all the spiritual Israel as Moses did the outward Israel; and his word was to be heard and stand in all things whatsoever he shall say unto his people: and whosoever will not hear and obey this prophet, shall be cut off from among the holy, spiritual, and inwardly living people.

Joshua who succeeded Moses, led but into the figurative rest: he was but a figure of him that inwardly leads into the inward and spiritual rest; which the true Jews, which are inwardly created and formed by God, and made a willing people in the day of his power, enter into.

The pillar of cloud, and pillar of fire in the wilderness, were but figures of the spiritual pillar of cloud and fire, by

which the spiritual Israel are led and defended in the glorious gospel day of God's Spirit and power. Read Isaiah, chap. iv. which speaketh of the gospel-day, and the pillar and cloud of fire to be created therein, and of the defence which is to be on all the inward and spiritual glory.

The land of Canaan, the outward good and kingdom of Israel, was but a figure of the inward land and kingdom of the inward Israel, in the days of the Messiah. This is the land of Judah in which the song is sung, because of the inward strong city where God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks, which the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, enter into. Isaiah xxvi.

Their outward kings in that land, and particularly David, were but types of the spiritual king, the spiritual David, whom God will raise up to the spiritual people, who should seek the Lord their God, and David their king; who shall be their spiritual shepherd and ruler, whom God hath appointed to feed them in the integrity of his heart, and to guide them by the skilfulness of his hands, who is King of righteousness and peace inwardly, and who ministers righteousness and peace to the sheep and lambs of his pastures.

Their outward priests (even their high-priests) were but a representation of the great high-priest of God, who was to be a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek. Psal. cx.

Their outward covenant (made with them from the outward mount Sinai, upon the giving of the law, and holy statutes and ordinances, by which they were to live and enjoy God in their outward state) was but a shadow of the inward and spiritual covenant, the new and everlasting covenant, which God makes with his inward and spiritual people in the latter days.

Their outward law, as written and engraven in tables of stone, was but a shadow of the inward law, which God puts into the children of the new covenant, insomuch that they need not go outwardly to learn the knowledge of God, or his will or law; but the inward Israel find it inwardly written within. There the isles who wait for the law of the

Spirit of life, for the law of the Messiah, receive the ministration of the law (in the Spirit and power of the Messiah) which they wait for.

Their outward Mount Zion, on which the outward temple was built by Solomon, that wise king, that righteous king, that peaceable king, was a figure of the inward mountain, whereupon the inward house is built in the days of the gospel, in the days of the Messiah: and to this mountain are the spiritual people to come up and worship. And this is the Zion and Jerusalem (even inward and spiritual) from which the law and word of the Lord go forth in the days of the Messiah: and the spiritual house of Jacob combine or agree together to walk in the light of the Lord, who sends forth his light and truth, and leads them to his holy hill, and to his tabernacles.

Their outward tabernacle and temple, sanctified by God for him to dwell and appear in, was a shadow of God's inward dwelling place in man; "I will tabernacle in them." God dwelleth not in houses or temples made with hands; that is not the place of his rest, as saith the prophet Isaiah: but the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose throne is in heaven, and the earth his footstool, he dwelleth also with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Their outward sabbaths were not the lasting sabbath or rest of the gospel, but given them for a sign; but the day of redemption from sin, the day of resting from sin, the day of ceasing from the works of the flesh, the day wherein God is all, and doth all by his Spirit and power inwardly, and wherein he alone is exalted,—this is the day of rest which the Lord hath made for the spiritual Israel, and which they are glad of and rejoice in.

So their incense and sacrifices were not the lasting incense and sacrifices, but shadows thereof. The prayers of the saints, when God pours out the spirit of prayer and supplication upon them, and they pray to him therein, that is the incense. "Let my prayer be directed before thee as

incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." And this was the incense and pure offering, which in every place was to be offered up to God's name among the Gentiles, when his name should be great among them, as Malachi foretells. And what said David of old, when God's Spirit and the holy vision was upon him? "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit (rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God); a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The offering praise to God from a sincere heart, and the ordering of the conversation aright, these are the sacrifices well-pleasing to God; for sacrifices were not the thing which God mainly required of outward Israel, but this, OBEY MY VOICE: and obedience is more acceptable than all other sacrifices, and to hearken than the fat of the choicest rams.

Besides, those outward sacrifices could not remove or take away sin from the conscience, but he that came to do the will, and to put an end to those sacrifices and oblations, which were but outward and imperfect; he doth both wash and take away sins from within, and also bring in everlasting righteousness, where his light shines, and his pure life springs inwardly in the heart.

And this is the substance of all the shadows, even the light eternal, the word eternal, the Son of the living God (who is light as the Father is light), the word nigh in the mouth and heart, the word of the new covenant; the which Moses directed your Fathers to, Deut. xxx. and by which the Lord speaketh, and hath spoken throughout the world, Psal. l. 1. and teacheth every man that hearkeneth to his voice, to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God, as it is expressed by the prophet Micah.

Now to you Jews, of the outward line of Abraham (whose return to the Lord my soul most earnestly desireth

after, and for which I have most vehemently and wrestlingly prayed to the Lord) are some few weighty queries upon my heart:

Query 1. How came David to pant so after the living God, like the hart or hind after the water-brooks? Was it not from the quickening virtue of this inward word, which Moses, the man of God, had directed the mind to? Read Psal. cxix. and see how he breathed for quickenings from this word, on which all depends. And if ye come to experience this word, and the quickening virtue of it, and follow the Lord on therein, ye will soon come to know the day of the Messiah, and the glory of his kingdom, which is not outward, transitory, and of a perishing nature; but inward, spiritual, and everlasting (as David well knew, and spake sensibly of. Psal. cxlv. and elsewhere).

Query 2. What are the waters which every thirsty soul is invited to? Are they not the waters of the Messiah? are they not waters that flow out of the wells of salvation? Isaiah xii. Do not the spiritual Israel draw spiritual water out of the wells of the Saviour in the days of the Messiah? What is it to come to these waters? Oh that ye experimentally knew! But this I will tell you, from true and certain experience, that if ye come to take notice of this word of life, which God hath placed nigh in your mouths and hearts, to separate between the evil words and evil thoughts of the enemy's begetting and bringing forth, and the good words and good thoughts of God's begetting and bringing forth, and incline your ear to it, and come from that which it reproves in you, and draws you from to itself; your souls shall soon come to live; and he that gives you life, will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David: but ye must still mind him as a witness, and leader, and commander, inwardly in your hearts, that ye may be preserved in the covenant, and enjoy the blessings of it; see Isaiah lv.

Query 3. Did not the Messiah come at the set time, at the time set by the Holy Spirit of prophecy? Did he not come in the prepared body to do the will? and did he not

do the will? And after his obedience to his Father, was he not cut off, though not for himself? And after his cutting off, were not ye made desolate? Why were ye made desolate? Why did such a stroke come upon you as never before? Oh, consider it! Read Dan. ix. 24. to the end of the chapter, and let him that readeth understand.

Query 4. What was that curse, and on whom did it light? "Let their table become a snare to them," &c. Psa. lxix. Was it not on those that gave gall and vinegar to the Messiah to drink, whom David was a figure of, and spake in Spirit concerning? Whose eyes are always darkened? Doth not the veil lie still on your whole nation? Do ye know the inward mountain, where the veil or face of the covering is destroyed? in the inward day and light of the Messiah it is destroyed. There that which veils the noble eye of the mind is known, and also that which destroys and removeth it. To what purpose is it for you to read Moses and the prophets, when the veil is so upon you, that ye cannot see what is to be abolished, and is abolished, by the dawning of the glorious day of the Messiah, and what is to remain and never to be abolished? There is a Jewship, there is a circumcision, there is a sabbath, there is a rest, &c. for the inward and spiritual people, which is to remain, and never to be abolished.

Query 5. Who were those that God would hide his face from, and see what their end should be, because they were a froward generation, children in whom was no faith? Who were they that moved God to jealousy, and provoked him to anger? And what was the people and foolish nation he would provoke them to jealousy and anger with? Deut. xxxii. Was it not the spiritual, the holy nation inwardly, the true Jews, whom God took from among the Gentiles, whom he appeared among, and was a God and a Father to, when he cast off and forsook the Jews outward, and left them to be a desolation?

Query 6. Who are those that shall be hungry when God's servants shall eat? and thirsty, when God's servants shall drink? and ashamed, when his servants shall rejoice? Are

not your souls hungry and parched for want of the spiritual sustenance, which the living God satisfieth his servants with, making a feast of fat things to them on his inward holy mountain? And are not ye ashamed of your expectations of the Messiah, while the servants of the Lord rejoice in him, their Prince and Saviour, and witness him daily a leader and commander to them? What is the people whom the Lord hath slain and made desolate? (Are not ye a slain people to God, alienated from his life, Spirit, and power, dead in your literal notions and observations?) And what are the servants of the Lord, whom the Lord hath called by another name, even a name that ye never knew? See Isa. lxvi. And consider, how all your day God spread out his hand to you, and ye were rebellious, and would not hear; and now night is come upon you, and your visitation, as such a people, is and hath been long ended.

Query 7. Did not God signify by the prophet Malachi, that he had no pleasure in you, nor would accept an offering at your hand? And did not he also signify the choosing of the Gentiles in your stead; that the called among the Gentiles should be his people; and his name, which ye had profaned, should be great among them, and their incense and pure offering in every place be accepted, even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same? read Mal. chap. i.

Query 8. Now the inward people, and the inward covenant, the new covenant, are brought forth, shall ye ever be owned or regarded as an outward people, according to your outward covenant any more? Will not all such expectations fail you for ever? Ye have looked, from generation to generation, for the coming and appearing of the Messiah outwardly, after an outward manner: but his coming and appearance is inward; and he setteth up his kingdom, his everlasting kingdom, in his saints, and in their hearts he ruleth inwardly; and the Messiah, the seed of the woman, bruiseth the head of the serpent there. Oh that ye knew the substance! Oh that ye knew the word of life in the heart, and were turned to it, and daily faithful and obedi-

ent! that ye might feel it crushing and dashing the power of sin and corruption in your hearts. This is the consolation, hope, and joy of the inward and spiritual Israel. Oh that ye might be made partakers thereof; and that your long outward captivity and desolation might at length end in inward freedom and redemption! Amen.

SOMEWHAT OF CONCERN TO THE JEWS SPIRITUAL, WHO ARE OF THE SEED OF ABRAHAM SPIRITUALLY, OR ACCORDING TO THE FAITH, AND GATHERED IN THIS DAY OF GOD'S POWER, TO THE TRUE AND EVERLASTING SHILOH.

"THE sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. xlix. 10.

Old Jacob, in the spirit of prophecy, saw that Judah was to have the sceptre, the kingly power; and it was not to depart from him, it was to be his right, and the lawgiver was to be between his feet, till Shiloh came; then the right was Shiloh's to reign, and to give laws to his people, whom he should gather out of the kingdom of darkness, and from Satan's power, into his own inward, spiritual and everlasting kingdom. This was the true king, God's king, whom he would set upon the holy hill of spiritual Zion; and all the holy, inward, spiritual gatherings of all people, scattered from the holy, living power, must be to him.

"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him." And his dominion shall not pass away, or the sceptre and lawgiving power shall not pass away from him, as it did from Judah, nor shall his kingdom ever be destroyed, Dan. vii. 14. but God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Query. But who are the people that shall be gathered to him?

Ans. The people that shall hear his voice, and come at

[redacted] shall receive the instruction of wisdom, and feel the living power and virtue of the Father, in the day of his power. It is written in the prophets, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." And every one that is taught and drawn of the Father, cometh to the Son, cometh to the Messiah, cometh to the Shiloh, to the Word eternal, to the Word of life in the heart.

Query. Was not the Messiah promised to the Jews, to come of them and to be appropriated to them?

Ans. He was promised to them, and to come of them, but not to be appropriated to them: but he was to be the universal Saviour to all that should come under his ensign and banner. "He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and he shall sprinkle many nations," &c. And God promised that he would give his Son (his elect, choice servant) for a light to the Gentiles.

Query. Were the Jews then excluded?

Ans. No: they were to be gathered to Shiloh, as well as others. Nay, the Lord had a special regard to them; the gospel was first preached to them; they had the first offer, or the first call to the spiritual glory; they were the children of the prophets, and of the covenant of God made with their fathers; unto whom God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless them, in turning away every one of them from their iniquities. And the whole nation, turning from their iniquities, should have been gathered by him, and should have enjoyed the blessing of his day and kingdom. Yea, the first gathering was from among them, and the first glorious gospel church was at Jerusalem, where the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus did most eminently and wonderfully break forth, and great grace was upon them all. But the nation was not gathered to Shiloh, nor did come under his sceptre and government; but only a remnant of the nation. So these being gathered, the rest were cast off; and the ensign was carried among the Gentiles, and the great gathering was there among them.

Quest. How is it manifest that the great gathering to Shiloh was to be from among the Gentiles?

Ans. By many express prophecies of scripture, and promises to the Messiah, that he should have the Gentiles for his inheritance and possession. When God established his king, the Messiah, upon the holy hill of spiritual Zion, notwithstanding all the heathen's rage against him, and the people of the Jews imagining a vain thing (thinking to keep the body of him in the grave, who was the resurrection and the life), what saith the Lord to him? "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Ps. ii. The Lord said in another place: "It is a light thing that thou mayest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Isa. xlix. 6. Again the Lord saith further: "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. i. 11. "Sing, O barren! thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." Isa. liv. 1. Who was the married wife? Who was the mother in the days of the first covenant? was it not the Jerusalem below? Who was then desolate and barren? was it not another Jerusalem, which is free, and the mother of all the spiritual children? Why was she now to rejoice and sing, but because she was to break forth on the right hand and on the left, and her seed was to inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited? ver. 3. The covenant of Mount Sinai did bring forth a great people, whereof Jerusalem, that was below, was the mother. The covenant afterwards made, besides that in Horeb, whereof the Word nigh in the heart and mouth is the foundation (by which Word God circumciseth), was as yet barren, and did not bring forth a people to the Lord. But this covenant was

to have a time; the Jerusalem above was to have a time, wherein her seed should inherit the Gentiles; and the Maker, the Husband, should be called the God of the whole earth. ver. 5. Read Gal. iv. and see how the apostle of the Gentiles expounds the mystery, showing which is the free woman, and her free children, and which is the bond woman, and which the bond children, who are cast out in the day of God, and in the shining of his heavenly light inwardly, and cannot inherit the glorious kingdom of the gospel, with the children of the free woman. And consider: who were the people in the time of the first covenant? who obtained mercy then? Were they not the Jews? And who were not a people? and who did not obtain mercy, but were left out of the love and mercy of the first covenant? Were they not the Gentiles? And did not the Lord promise that he would have mercy on them that had not obtained mercy? and that he would say to them that were not his people, THOU ART MY PEOPLE; and they shall say, MY GOD? Hos. ii. 23. compared with Rom. ix. 26. Was not this once gloriously fulfilled in the first visitation of the Gentiles? And is it not again gloriously fulfilled in his now visiting them again with the fresh sound of the everlasting gospel, as was promised, Rev. xiv. 7.

Oh, what a promise is that concerning the day of God! that "in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." Isa. xi. 10. Is not *this the day* wherein the holy mountain is known, and that nothing can hurt or destroy there? And doth not the knowledge of the Lord cover his land, his earth, as the waters do the sea? And doth not the root of Jesse, the rock of life and salvation, stand for an ensign, placed so by God? and who can displace it, or shake them that are built on the inward Mount Zion? Yea, is not the rest of the weary soul, when he comes hither, found to be very glorious? And when this ensign is more fully lifted up, shall not the Gentiles more abundantly come unto God from the ends of the earth, and bewail their dead and estranged estate from God?

(saying, "Surely our fathers inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein is no profit." Jer. xvi. 19.) And shall they not turn from all their idols to serve the living God? Thess. i. 9. And concerning the Messiah it was promised, that in his name should the Gentiles trust, and the isles should wait for his law, and he should bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Isa. xli. 11. with Matt. xii. 21.

But what should I mention any more scriptures unto you concerning this thing, whenas ye have so large, full, certain, and daily experience of it in that which is pure and living of God, which never deceived nor can deceive any; for ye are begotten by his Spirit into his own image and nature, and have received the Spirit of adoption, wherein ye cry, Abba, Father, to the Father of spirits. He found you indeed in a strange land, under great captivity, and alienation from him. Ye have been in Egypt, in Sodom, in Babylon, spiritually; but the mercy of the Lord hath followed you thither, and the arm of the Lord hath reached to you there, and hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon: yea, he whom the Lord hath given for a light to the Gentiles hath shined to you there, in the midst of your darkness. So that God sent among you the prophet like unto Moses (though far above Moses), and hearing him, he led you out of Egypt, and by the rod of his power did signs and wonders and valiant acts there, breaking that power which, with a strong hand, held you captive there, and oppressed you. And you have known the travel, trials, and temptations in the spiritual wilderness, and the falling of the carcasses which were to fall there, and the holy leading by the pillar of cloud and fire through all the entanglements and dangers therein. Yea, and the faithful among you, the tried and prepared among you, have passed over Jordan, the river of pure judgment, into the good land, and come to witness David and Solomon (who are one in Spirit) your King, who rules in righteousness, and ministers to you peace everlasting. And ye have a High-priest there, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, who is made the everlasting High-priest of God; not after the law of a

carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: whose lips preserve the knowledge of the law for you, in that endless power of life: who ministers for you and to you, in that endless power, and intercedes with power and efficacy, and sprinkles the blood of the covenant upon you, which takes away sin from your hearts and consciences. So that ye know the inward Jew's state, the inward holy land and kingdom, the inward circumcision, before ye enter into that land; and the inward Lamb, the inward passover, the inward Mount Zion, and Jerusalem; the inward sacrifices and incense, the inward tabernacle, temple, and ark of the covenant, the inward shew-bread, the inward manna, the inward rod that budded, the inward candlestick, and the lamps, which are never to go out in God's temple. And what should I say more? All that that people were to be outwardly, in an outward way and state, hath God made you inwardly in the substance; and what God would have been to them outwardly, had they obeyed his voice, and kept his statutes and judgments, that he is to you inwardly, who are the called and chosen and faithful followers of the Lamb; and ye are the enjoyers of their blessings and promises inwardly. Oh, the glory of your state to the eye that is opened to see it!

Now, somewhat doth remain on my heart unto you. Oh, be daily sensible of the tender goodness and mercy of the Lord, which is broken forth among you! What mercy, what love, hath the Father shown unto you, that ye should be thus accounted the children of God! that they, which were once nigh, should be removed so far off; and ye, which were so far off, should be brought so nigh, and should for ever inherit the sure mercies of David! For of a truth the Lord will never forsake you; but his mercy endures for ever towards you, and your stakes shall never be removed; but this inward building shall stand for ever. This Zion is the place of God's rest, where he will dwell for ever; whereof the outward Zion was but a figure.

Secondly, Remember what the Lord promised himself concerning you. When he was weary of that people, and

continually complaining of them, oh, what did he promise himself concerning the people he would bring forth by the Spirit and power of the Messiah in the latter days! Did he not promise himself that they should be a holy people, an inwardly circumcised people, a people that should please him; sheep that should hear the Shepherd's voice, and be healed by him, gathered home to him, and so follow and learn of him the Shepherd; that they should all know him from the least to the greatest; and that he would forgive their sins, and heal their backslidings, and they should not return to folly, or backslide any more, as the children after the flesh always did? Is not this the people whom indeed God hath formed for himself, who shall show forth his praise?

Thirdly, Remember what a covenant God hath prepared to make with you, as ye incline your ears to him, and are led by him into the holy agreement with him; even a covenant which is not weak, as the old covenant was; but is full of virtue and vigor, to enable you to do whatever God requires of you. Mark what it contains, putting God's fear into you: not the fear which is taught by man's precepts, which man may get into his carnal mind; but which God places as the treasury of life in the heart; as it is written, "The fear of the Lord and his treasure." Isai. xxxiii. 6. And oh, who knows the preciousness of his treasure! How it cleanseth the heart, and keepeth it clean, and will not suffer the mind that is seasoned with it, and kept to it, to depart from the living God! It fenceth from unbelief, it fenceth from disobedience; it will not suffer the soul so much as to meddle with any appearance of evil. Oh, precious, glorious, blessed treasure! happy is the man that feareth always with this fear! Another precious thing this covenant contains, is the law written in the heart, that it shall be as near, yea, nearer than sin is, in the heart that is made tender, and hath the law of the Spirit of life written in it. Who knows what it is to have the law of love, the law of life, the law of the Spirit, the law of faith, the law of new obedience, livingly written by God in his heart! Surely none can but they in whom God writes it! And such can-

not but desire to have it written in their hearts by his blessed finger daily more and more. But this covenant contains yet more, even the putting of his own Spirit within them, to be a fountain of life there, a fountain of strength and wisdom there, to make them more and more willing in the day of his power, and to cause them to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and judgments, and do them, that the Lord their God may bless them, and delight in them.

Oh, who would not long after, and take up the cross and shame, to enjoy the glory of this state! Oh, what hath God done for a poor despised remnant among the Gentiles! Oh, who would not desire to keep this blessed covenant with the Lord, that he might fully enjoy the Lord, that the marriage with the Maker might be witnessed in his loving kindness and everlasting righteousness, and all unrighteousness and uncleanness might be put away, removed, and separated from the heart for ever! Ah, the virgin spirit which the Lamb loves, and delights to marry with! "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and he must part with all that is old, evil, unclean, and corrupt in him, that would be joined to the Lord, and become one Spirit with him. Oh, who would lose the precious fear of the covenant, which is clean, and endureth for ever, and keepeth clean and chaste to the Lord for ever! And who would miss of one law which God hath to write in the hearts of his children, when every law is a law of life, and changeth the mind into the nature of the lawgiver! And who would grieve God's Spirit, which is our Comforter, or quench that which kindles the pure flame of love and life in our hearts! Much less can any of his dear and tender children be willing to vex him, by manifest carelessness and disobedience, who giveth us to drink of the river of his pleasure.

Oh, my dear friends, ye do not know the great travail of my heart, that all the children of the Lord might walk before him in all well-pleasing, that we might come all into covenant, into the full covenant, and walk fully with him in the covenant, that his anger might be for ever turned away from us all, and he might never be wroth with, nor rebuke

any of us any more. It is written on my heart the breaking forth of this glory would reach the Jews: and though they be cast off as to their outward state, and not so to be owned, or come into that glory any more; yet there is a day of mercy and love for them, as to that inward state of life and redemption, which their outward state typified: and the breaking forth of the full glory of the Gentiles, and the manifestation of God's mighty power and presence with them (they being made by God a people to him, and so walking with God, as none possibly can but those who are created anew, and so made by him), this might provoke the Jews (the poor, scattered, forsaken Jews) to seek after the Lord their God, and David their King, inwardly to be revealed in them, and rule among them.

The Lord God of our life and tender mercies, carry on to perfection this blessed work of his, which he hath so mightily begun, and so mightily hitherto carried on; and keep us in the sense of his good Spirit, and in tender and holy subjection thereto, and in unity together in the life, wherein we have been gathered and preserved, and in pure judgment over all the workings of the enemy everywhere, and in the gospel love one to another, and to all men, even our greatest enemies, that we may seek the good of all men, even the rescuing and preserving all out of sin and wrath, as much as in us is possible; that the pure light wherewith our God and heavenly Father hath enlightened us, may shine in us; and the life wherewith he hath quickened us, may live in us, and we may feed on nothing but life, and grow in nothing but life and truth, to the great glory of our heavenly Father, and to the great joy of our hearts. Amen.

A few words to England, my Native Country.

O Land of my Nativity! O my dear Countrymen!

The pure power of the Lord is upon me, and the springs of life open in me; and among many other things, I am

melted in love and desires after your welfare. And this is in my heart to say to you: If I now testify to you in truth of a pearl, a heavenly pearl, an everlasting pearl, will ye not hear me? If I tell you your heart is the field, or earth, wherein it is hid, will ye not consider of it? If the everlasting gospel be preached again, which contains true tidings of redemption from sin, will ye not listen after it? If the kingdom of God, and righteousness of Christ, be to be revealed within, would ye not willingly learn to wait for it there, and beg of God that the eye may be opened in you, which alone can see it when it doth appear. Indeed God's visitation is upon this nation in an especial manner; his light and power is breaking forth in it, against the darkness and power of the spirit of Satan, which hath captivated and still captivateth many. Ye desire outward liberty, and the enjoyment of your outward rights; would ye not be free inwardly? Free from the base, earthly, selfish nature and spirit, which man, fallen from God, and the glory wherein he created him, is degenerated into? Oh! is not the power of God, and life of Christ, able to restore man to this? He that created man at first so glorious, in his own image, is he not able to create him anew? Oh, hear, my dear countrymen! the power is revealed which createth anew; and they that receive it, and are as clay in the hands of the great Potter, given up to be formed by it, are daily created (by the operation of it) anew, into a holy, heavenly, innocent, living, tender, righteous frame day by day; and are made willing, daily more and more, to be the Lord's, in this day of his power; and do receive power to become sons, and strength against their soul's enemies: and the glorious work of redemption which God hath begun in them, the arm of his strength mightily carrieth on in them, to their comfort and his everlasting praise.

There is a spiritual Egypt and Sodom, as well as there was an outward; and there is a spiritual wilderness, and Canaan also; and the arm of God's power inwardly and spiritually hath been revealed in this spiritual Egypt, wilderness, and Canaan, as really as ever it was in the outward.

Do ye not read of a Jew inward, and a circumcision inward, and the leaven inward, and keeping the feast of unleavened bread, even of bread that is not leavened with sin? And he that eats of the unleavened bread, it unleavens him of sin, and leavens him with life and holiness: for it is a holy bread, and a living bread. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, which they that feed upon live, and they that live feed upon. And though they be many, yet feeding upon this bread, they become one bread, one living body, consisting of a living head, and living members; for the same life and pure heavenly nature which is in the head, is communicated by him to the members.

But how shall we find this? may some say.

I will tell you how we found it, and how none can miss of it, that sweep the house, and make a diligent and faithful search after it. That in the heart of man which turns against sin, discovers sin, draws from sin, wherein God ministers help against sin,—that is it. That is the pearl hid; that is the kingdom hid; in that is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, in all that receive and give up to this holy leaven. This is of the nature of God and Christ; this is a measure of his light, of his pure life; this is the law and commandment everlasting, which God writes in the hearts of his spiritual Israel. For the inward Jew hath inward tables, where the inward law is written, for the inward eye to read. Oh, how nigh is God inwardly, to the inward people, in this our day! Oh! the pure glory is broke forth. But alas! men are in their several sorts of dreams, and take no notice of it. What shall the Lord do to awaken this nation? In what way shall his power appear, to bring down unrighteousness, and to bring up righteousness, in the spirits of people? Do ye not think the Lord hath been at work? How could deceit be so wasted inwardly, and truth so grown inwardly, and overspread more and more, and gain ground in the nation, if the hand and power of the Lord were not with it, blessing it. Oh! take notice of the handy-work of the Lord, ye children of men, and wait to feel truth near, and to partake of the living vir-

[illegible] your hearts creating [illegible] inwardly pass [illegible] and the new heav- [illegible] wherein [illegible] might become a [illegible] be sensible of [illegible] governed [illegible] the [illegible] was not [illegible] a creature [illegible] with love in [illegible] as to him- [illegible] of several [illegible] The Lord is restoring [illegible] pure religion again. The pearl [illegible] and comprehends it. Oh, buy the pearl [illegible] sell all that is contrary [illegible] take up the cross to all that is evil in thee, as the light in thee maketh it manifest, and thou shalt have the free possession of it in thy heart, and feel it a root of life, a treasure of life, a well of life, out of which the living water will be daily springing up in thee unto life everlasting. Amen.

The [illegible] of the 7th month, 1676.

Three Queries upon three verses of the xlvith Psalm.

Verse 4. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

Query 1. Which is the river, and what are the streams thereof, which make glad the city of God? And which is the city of God which they make glad? which are the tabernacles of the Most High? and which is the holy place of those tabernacles? Oh, my dear countrymen, that every one in this nation did understand and enjoy these things!

for the Lord is ready to beget a will, to beget a thirst, in the hearts of the children of men; and whosoever thirsteth, whosoever will, is called to the waters, and may come to the waters, and take of the water of life freely, (Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.) yea, to the full satisfaction of their souls. For indeed this is the day of God's power, wherein he doth make his people willing to come to him, and to abide with him in the fountain of living waters; and those that do come to him, and abide with him, he abundantly satisfieth with the fatness of his house, and giveth them to drink of the river of his pleasures. Psa. xxxvi. 8, 9. Mark: God is the fountain of living waters, with him is the fountain of life, a river of pleasures, a river whose streams make glad the whole city, even the holy place of all the tabernacles of the Most High; and he giveth his citizens to drink of it; and whosoever drinketh of it, it maketh them glad, it refresheth their life. Oh that more knew what this means!

Verse 5. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early;" or when the morning appeareth, or from the morning appearing.

Query 2. How is God in the midst of this city? Is it not more gloriously in an inward way, than ever he was in the temple in the outward Jerusalem, in an outward way? How is she built? How is she founded and situated? How comes it about that she shall not be moved? How is God her refuge and strength, and present help in the time of trouble? After what manner doth God arise inwardly, and scatter his enemies? How doth the morning light help her? After what manner, when the enemy cometh in like a flood, doth the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him? Ah, blessed are they that know and experience and live in the enjoyment of these things! Oh that this whole nation did so! Were it not worth the suffering of much, the denying of much, and the bearing of much judgment, to come to this?

Verse 10. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among (or in) the heathen: I will be exalted in the earth."

Query 8. What is that stillness wherein God is known to be God, not outwardly in notion, but inwardly in the heart? What is that silence of mind, wherein God teacheth his Israel in the new covenant, to know him as he is; even all of them, from the greatest to the least? How will God come to be exalted in the heathen, and in the earth? Is it not by the light of his day, breaking forth and shining in them? Where this day breaks forth in any heart, doth it not break down and destroy the kingdom of darkness inwardly? And doth not the King of glory consume the man of sin, the wicked one that was exalted in the temple before (which temple belonged of right to God), with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming or appearing? Isa. xi. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 8. Then is the day known wherein the Lord alone is exalted. Oh that this day were more known; and the Lord, who is indeed worthy, were more exalted, and all flesh become his footstool for ever!

Concerning the true Church and ministry under the Gospel, and the Maintenance thereof; some few Questions answered in Truth and Plainness of heart, and left to the Witness and Testimony of God in other Men's Consciences.

Quest. 1. WHICH is the true church, or the gospel church or the church according to the new covenant? (For there was an old covenant, and a church according to that, under the law; and there is a new covenant, and a church according to that, under the gospel.)

Ans. For the clearing of this to the hearts and consciences of people, let us inquire and consider what the new covenant is, and then it will more easily appear which is the church according to the new covenant.

The new covenant according to plain scripture, and according to manifest experience in this blessed day of the the shining of the gospel light in men's hearts, is a covenant

of God's putting his law in the inward parts of people, and writing it in their hearts, and of his becoming their God, and making them his people, and of teaching them all to know him (inwardly and experimentally) from the least to the greatest, and of being merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembering their sins and iniquities no more. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

Now if this be the new covenant, the covenant of the gospel church, then they are the gospel church who are the people of God according to this covenant, who have the law put by God into their inward parts, and written in their hearts; and so according to this law and covenant, have God to be their God, and are his people, and are taught by him to know him (as it is written, "All my people shall be taught of the Lord," Isa. liv. 13. and John vi. 45.), and whose unrighteousness God hath been merciful to, and whose sins and iniquities he remembereth no more, being washed away from their consciences by the blood of the everlasting covenant, which the blood of bulls and goats could never do: so that this is the New Testament church (or gospel church); a church of Jews inward, as the law church was a church of Jews outward: a church of inward worshippers, of worshippers in Spirit and in truth, John iv. 23. as the law church was a church of worshippers outward: a church of inwardly circumcised ones, as the law church was a church of outwardly circumcised ones. Rom. ii. 29. A church of such as are inwardly holy, as the law church was to be a church of such as were outwardly holy: a church of such as offer inward incense and sacrifices, as the law church was a church of such as offered outward incense and sacrifices: a church of inwardly redeemed ones, from the inward Egypt, from the inward darkness and power of Satan, as the law church was a church of such as were redeemed from the outward Egypt, and the power of Pharaoh outward: a church that hath the inward ark, (Rev. xi. 19.) the inward presence, the inward manna, &c., as the outward church of the Jews had the outward.

Quest. 2. Which is the true gospel ministry, and who are the true gospel ministers?

Ans. Those whom Christ sends forth, in the Spirit and power of his Father, to gather and build up this church. Christ had all power in heaven and earth given him, even to this very end, to gather, defend, and build up his church; and he bid his apostles wait for the same power, and sends forth his ministers in the same power, that they may be able ministers of the gospel, which is not words but power, even the power of God unto salvation. Rom. i. 16. The new covenant stands not in the letter, but in Spirit and power; and they that are the ministers of it, must receive life, Spirit, and power from Christ, the head, and minister in that Spirit, life, and power to the members, or they cannot nourish and build them up; yea, they must preach and minister to the world in it, or they are not able to gather out of the world into it. Christ, the Lord of his church, the foundation of life in his church, the everlasting rock, is a living stone; and his church is built of lively stones; and how can any minister life unto them, or build them up in the life, Spirit, and power, but who are in the life, Spirit, and power, and who receive life, Spirit, and power from the Head, to further, quicken, and build up the living members with? The milk which nourisheth the living babe, is living, which must come pure from the breast of life, and not be mixed with man's wisdom or brain inventions, or it cannot yield pure nourishment. What then must the bread and wine and water of the kingdom be, whereon the children and heirs of the kingdom must feed, or they cannot be satisfied? And the ministers of the gospel are stewards of this heavenly life, this heavenly Spirit, this heavenly power, this heavenly treasure, which they have in the earthen vessels, and which God enables them to bring forth, for the feeding of his lambs and sheep. Christ said unto Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Peter answered him, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." If it be so, "feed my lambs, feed my sheep," said Christ to him. But how should he feed them? In what should he

feed them? With what should he feed them? All power, saith Christ, is given me in heaven and in earth; and I am to ascend to my Father, and to receive the fulness of his Spirit; and do ye wait, and ye shall receive abundantly of the same Spirit and power, and then in that Spirit and power ye shall be able to feed my lambs and sheep, that are begotten and gathered to me, in it; but out of it none is able to feed and build them up; for that is the very thing they are to be fed with and built up in. Indeed a man may be a minister of the letter, a minister of the law, without the Spirit and power; but of the gospel he cannot possibly; for that consists not in letter, but in Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. and the faith that is to be begotten there, is not to stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. The gospel state, the gospel church, the gospel building, begins in the power, and is carried on in the power, and finished or perfected in the power; and the whole ministry of the gospel is to partake of this power, and minister in it, or they can do nothing in this work. Christ Jesus our Lord begun it in this power, and none can carry it on without this power: the Lord God of glory laid the foundation; "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation." &c. Isa. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 6. And the quickening Spirit alone is able to make living stones and spiritual stones; and the Lord alone is able to build them up by the operation of this Spirit and power; and they that are the true ministers of the gospel, minister in this, and are to wait for it daily from God, that they may minister in it.

Quest. 3. What is the maintenance of the ministers of Christ, or what is to be the maintenance of the true ministers under the gospel?

Ans. Christ, who hath sent them forth to minister in his name, hath provided for them; and they that are his true ministers, are satisfied with what he hath provided for them, Matt. x. 10. being careful not to make the gospel, which is to be an inward blessing, outwardly chargeable to any. The mind of the true ministers is about the service of Christ; how they may be faithful to him, gather souls to him, feed

them with the bread of life from him; not what they shall have from men for so doing, for such covet no man's gold or silver, &c.

Some Questions answered concerning the Lamb's War.

Quest. 1. Who is the Lamb?

Ans. He that takes away the sins of the world. The Word which was in the beginning. "Behold the Lamb of God," saith John, John i. 1. and ver. 29. He that was born of the virgin Mary after the flesh; and was also the man-child, born of the travailing church, after the Spirit. Rev. xii. 5.

Quest. 2. Who makes war with the Lamb?

Ans. All that are in wickedness, in darkness, in sin and corruption, and under the power thereof, who strive to defend and maintain this kingdom against the appearance of his light, Spirit, and power in them.

Quest. 3. What strength have they on their side that make war against the Lamb?

Ans. The strength of the great red dragon, who hath seven heads and ten horns; and in every one of his heads is wisdom, and in every one of his horns there is power. So that dreadful is the battle that is fought between them, either inwardly in the heart, or outwardly in the world, when Christ appears in his light, Spirit, and power, to assault and break down the kingdom of darkness, and to set up his own kingdom, which must be set up, even in the world. Dan. vii. 14, 27. Rev. xi. 15.

Quest. 4. Did the great red dragon and his army ever (in any respect) prevail in this battle?

Ans. Yes; for even while the Lamb, and his pure life and holy testimony have prevailed, so that the dragon and his army could get no ground over them inwardly, but salvation (the wall and bulwark of God's heritage) and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ, did prevail inwardly; yet the dragon, even then,

hath prevailed over their goods, liberties, and lives outwardly; and he drove the woman, the true church, out of her place, as I may say, that she was forced to fly into the wilderness, he so sorely assaulted her: yea, after that also, he made war with the remnant of her seed, and cast some of them into prison, and drank the blood of those that would not drink his false church's cup, but keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. Rev. xii. and chap. ii. 10. Yea, the beast to which he gave his power (which had seven heads and ten horns like him, chap. xiii. 1.) made war with the saints, and overcame them outwardly, though he could not overcome them inwardly; for he could not make them to worship him, ver. 7, 8. Nay, nor the second beast neither, though he had horns like a lamb, and spake like a dragon, and exercised all the power of the first beast, and did great wonders, and had power to give life unto the image of the former beast, and would kill all that would not worship the image of it; and would suffer none to buy or sell but such as had the mark or name of the beast; yet neither could this beast overcome the followers of the Lamb, as to their inward life and testimony, though it had power to kill and suppress them outwardly, ver. 11. to the end, and chap. xiv. 9. to ver. 13. which plainly shows the saints had patience, and kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, and would not worship the beast and his image, nor receive his mark, either in forehead or hand.

Quest. 5. What was the cry up and down nations, when the dragon and the beast thus prevailed, and when the false church carried her cup of fornications up and down through kingdoms and nations, and made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drink thereof; and who would not drink thereof, she would not let them buy nor sell, but impoverish, imprison them, and drink their blood? Rev. xvii. 2. and 6.

Ans. The cry everywhere was, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with the beast?" Indeed there appeared no power anywhere able to withstand or re-

sist this power, which the dragon had, who gave it both to the beast which arose out of the sea, and to the beast which arose out of the earth; both which joined together to persecute all that would not drink of the false church's cup, which was golden without, but full of abomination and filthiness of fornication, fornicating from the holy life, Spirit, and power of the Lamb inwardly, who is the head of the true church and true worshippers. Rev. xiii. 4. and chap. xvii. 4, 5.

Quest. 6. What is the time of the dragon's, the beast's, and false church's thus prevailing against the true church, in reference to the outward, though they cannot prevail against its inward life and testimony; but that (through patience and suffering) prevails over and reigns inwardly, in the midst of all their cruelty and oppressing of the outward man?

Ans. It is the time of Antichrist's reign, and sitting in the temple as if he were God, and exalting himself over all that is called God, and which ought to be worshipped. It is the time of the true church's being in the wilderness, and of the man-child's (which the true church brought forth) being caught up to God; which things were to last, according to the scripture account, one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or a time, times, and half a time. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Rev. xii. 6, 14.

Quest. 7. What will the Lamb do when this time is out?

Ans. He will come and make war again, he will come with his heavenly armies, armed with spiritual armor, and fight a heavenly battle; yea, he will judge and make war in righteousness, against the unrighteousness of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet; and his heavenly armies shall follow him their Captain and Leader, on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, who shall fight in his Spirit and power, against all that he fighteth against; and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and make the spirits of all his opposers bow under him, and fly to shelter themselves from that

wrath which they cannot escape. Oh, who would not kiss the Son, that he might not provoke the Lamb to wrath against him, whose wrath is dreadful! Rev. xix. 11. to the end. Psal. ii. 11.

Quest. 8. What shall the cry be, when God's Spirit and power prevaileth over the dragon's spirit and power, when the Lamb gets the victory, when he smites the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall slay the wicked; when he brings down the dragon, beast, and false prophet, and the false church, mother of harlots (which hath drunk the blood of saints), with his vials, plagues, woes, thunders, &c.; when Babylon the great city falls, which made all nations drunk with her spiritual wine of fornication?

Ans. Then the power which doth this shall be magnified. Then it shall be said no more, who can make war with the beast? but who can withstand his power? Who can make war with the innocent, righteous Lamb (who hath his sword in his mouth), and with his tender-hearted, faithful followers, and prosper? "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. xv. 3, 4. "Yea, a great voice of much people in heaven shall say: Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, who did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his saints at her hand," chap. xix. ver. 1, 2.

Now doth it not concern all people to consider which is Zion, God's holy mountain, and which is the Jerusalem of his building; and the holy city of God, the holy church of God, the mother of all the truly living children? for the Jerusalem which is above, and which is free, is the mother of them all. Gal. iv. 26. And also which is Babylon, the city built by man, and the spirit of antichrist, in a kind of likeness, but not in the real nature of the true church; that

they may wait for and follow God's call to come out of her, and may not partake of her sins, of her sorceries (Rev. xviii. 22.), of her fornication from the pure life, Spirit, and power, and setting up worships, and compelling people to worship in her forms (which are out of the life, and out of the power), that they partake not of her plagues, which will indeed be very dreadful, such as shall affright any from coming near her, or meddling with her spiritual sorceries and fornications any more. Rev. xviii. 4. and ver. 9, 10. Oh! therefore let every one consider what the beast is, what his image, what the mark in the forehead, what in the right hand; and take heed he be not found worshipping the beast and his image, or receiving his mark, either in his forehead or right hand, lest God make him to drink of the wine of his wrath which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and have no rest day nor night. Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. I had rather run great hazards outwardly, and suffer much affliction and persecution from men, to keep my soul true to God, in the spiritual worship and testimony which he hath given me, against all false ways and invented worships, than expose my soul to the hazard of drinking of this dreadful cup of God's indignation; which the Lord God of tender mercies teach men, and give them true wisdom, to avoid and escape. Amen.

CONCLUSION.

"Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men); so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider." Isa. lii. 13, 14, 15.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people shall fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Psa. xlv. 2. to 8.

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the

thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. xxxv. ver. 3. to the end.

Blessed be the Lord God of life for ever! these scriptures, and many more, are sweetly and preciously fulfilled in the hearts of a remnant, in this our day. They were once (in a degree) fulfilled in the day of the appearance of the word of life, in the prepared body of flesh. They were again more generally fulfilled, in the day of the pouring out of his Spirit, and gathering a people to him, both from among the Jews and Gentiles, whom he did sprinkle with his holy life, Spirit, and power. And they are again fulfilled in the hearts of many, after the long night of darkness, and great and large apostasy from the Spirit and power of the apostles. Blessed, oh, blessed be the Lord! the Sun of righteousness hath again shone forth, and appeared inwardly in a glorious, living, powerful manner, to them that have feared his name; and he hath been a God of vengeance to the man of sin; yea, to all that was dark, fleshly, and corrupt in them; and a God of mercy and tender bowels to those which panted after and waited for his salvation. And the healing virtue from under the wings of the Saviour, and the holy anointing, have dropped upon the eyes of the blind, the pure eye-salve, and they have been opened; and the ears of the deaf, by the voice of the Son of God, have been unstopped; and the inwardly and spiritually lame have leaped as an hart; and the tongue, which could not name God in truth and righteousness, but hath been dumb before him, and before men also, could not but sing, because of the

breaking forth of the waters and streams of life, upon the thirsty land and parched ground, making them a pool and springs of water; which land, which thus is changed from its wilderness and parched state, into a holy, fresh, and living state, the dragons do not lodge in; nor is it any more a habitation or cage for unclean and noisome birds (as great professing Babylon, the mother of harlots, with all her fleshly professing daughters, is), but life dwells there: the Holy One is in the midst of this land, and it brings forth the fruits of life and righteousness, to the righteous and Holy One. And here the King of glory's highway, even the way of holiness, is known, which none but those whom he makes holy can walk in. Let men profess what they will, yet being unclean in heart and conversation, they cannot pass over to come into this way; but the holy, they which are made holy by God, and keep to, live in, and follow that which is holy, though wayfaring men, and though otherwise fools, yet they shall not err here, but be preserved by the holy power, in the holy way, which is prepared and cast up for these: and as for that which would tear and destroy, it shall not be found on all that holy mountain where these live and feed. Yea, here is the house of God and throne of God, and God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, where the ransomed of the Lord enjoy the presence of the bridegroom, whom God hath set King, and who reigns on his holy hill of inward and spiritual Zion, and causeth them to sing, who feel him reign (even the everlasting seed of life to reign inwardly in the heart). Oh, everlasting joy is upon their heads! they have obtained joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing flee away, when the joy unspeakable and full of glory is felt springing in the heart, from the sense of the presence and enjoyment of the bridegroom. For of a truth, the Lord hath comforted Zion; yea, he hath comforted many of her waste places (he was angry with her daughters, before their filth was purged away by the Spirit of judgment and burning; since that time his anger hath been turned away, and he hath comforted them, Isa. xii. 1,

&c.); and he hath made her wilderness in many hearts like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord (even like the garden that he waters): and how can joy and gladness but be found here, with thanksgiving and the voice of melody? Isa. lviii. 11. and chap. li. 8. Thus it is with such of the gathered people and nation of the Lord, that hearken and give ear to him, and have known the way of life to proceed out of his mouth, and his judgment to rest for a light, ver. 4.

SOME

SENSIBLE, WEIGHTY QUERIES,

CONCERNING

SOME THINGS VERY SWEET AND NECESSARY TO BE EXPERIENCED IN THE TRULY CHRISTIAN STATE.

WHEREUNTO IS ADDED

A POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING

SOME QUERIES ON ISAIAH L. 10, 11.

A SCRIPTURE OF DEEP COUNSEL AND CONCERN TO THE DARKENED AND DISTRESSED STATES OF SOME AMONG THOSE THAT FEAR AND OBEY THE LORD.

Written by one who hath been sorely darkened and distressed for a long season, but at length mercifully enlightened and comforted by the hand which afflicted and distressed him;

ISAAC PENINGTON.

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." Hos. vi. 1.

"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Isa. xii. 1.

A BRIEF PREFACE.

INDEED the Lord hath reached unto me by his living power, and thereby hath begotten somewhat which he doth own, and which he hath taught to know and own him in his living appearances in my heart; and by its pure life and operations in me, I know it to be the pure power. And truly I would fain have this life and power more and more reach to, prevail, and spread in my own heart, and in the hearts of other men. I am not for any notional religion out of the power, in any way or form whatsoever (no, indeed I am not so much as for the very true form of godliness out of the power); but where there is any touch, any sense, any operation, any savor of the true life and power anywhere, my soul loveth and embraceth it, blessing the Lord for it. And oh! that this might be visited by the Lord wherever it is, and kept alive to the day of redemption, and led by the Lord into the pure and living way, and holy, everlasting covenant of life, wherein he redeems; for which end these queries have broke forth from me: and indeed no less than a necessity (or a necessitous force of love and life pursuing me) hath constrained me to publish them, who with reverence of spirit commit them into the hands of the Lord, who can open the hearts of whom he pleaseth, and give the living sense of what comes from him. I am satisfied that God's powerful work of redeeming will go on. Oh, blessed be his name, who hath a mighty arm, and hath done mighty things with it inwardly in men's hearts! and we are in the true faith assured that he will yet do more mighty things, as he seeth good, to the gladding of the hearts of those whose hope is in him, and who have no help besides him.

SOME

SENSIBLE, WEIGHTY QUERIES,

CONCERNING SOME THINGS VERY SWEET AND NECESSARY TO BE EXPERIENCED IN THE TRULY CHRISTIAN STATE.

Query 1. WHAT is the water wherewith the soul or inner man is to be washed, that it may be cleansed from its inward filthiness, as outward things are by washing with outward water? Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Psal. li. 2. &c.

Query 2. What is the answer of a good conscience towards God, when the soul is inwardly baptized and made clean? Pet. iii. 21.

Query 3. Christ saith, "Blessed are the pure in heart:" Do, or can, any witness purity of heart before this washing?

Query 4. How may the heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water; so that there may be a drawing near to God with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith? Heb. x. 22. Psal. xxvi. 6.

Query 5. How might the Jews wash and make themselves clean? Isa. i. 16. Could it be any otherwise done by them, than by taking heed to the word of the new covenant, nigh in the mouth and heart, to which Moses had directed them? Deut. xxx. 14. Psal. cxix. 9.

Query 6. What is the fire which takes hold of, and burns up the lusts and corruptions of the heart? Is it not the word of life within, which flames against evil, and hammers down evil? Doth not the Holy One in the midst of the spiritual Israel do this? When Christ, who knocks at the door of the heart, is let in, and his voice hearkened to, doth he not become a Spirit of judgment and burning, judging and burning up what is evil there? Is it not blessed to know

this spiritual appearance, and this work of Christ in the heart? Isa: iv. 4. and x. 17.

Query 7. What are the enemies of a man's house? Who must overcome them? How may they be overcome? Is a man safe, or delivered from them till they be overcome? Mat. xv. 19. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Query 8. What is the house of the strong man, where he dwells till he be dispossessed? Who can dispossess him? How doth he dispossess him? How doth he spoil his goods, and then garnish the house anew? Oh, what a new creation and change within is witnessed when this is done! And who would not wait, and pray, and believe, and suffer the judgings and burnings of the Spirit of judgment and burning, that this may be done thoroughly and effectually? Luke xi. 21, 22. Isa. xxvi. 9. 2 Cor. v. 17.

Query 9. What is that coming to Christ which none can witness but those that hear and learn of the Father, and are taught by him, in the drawings of the life and Spirit of the new covenant, to come to the Son? John vi. 44, 45.

Query 10. Who can confess Jesus to be the Lord by the Holy Ghost? Can any but they that receive the help of his Spirit, and feel somewhat of his lordship and holy dominion in their hearts? Isa. xxvi. 13.

Query 11. What is the precious faith, which is the gift of God, which none can obtain but they that are born of God? John i. 12, 13.

Query 12. Can any rightly believe that Jesus is the Christ, unless they receive this faith, which God gives to his own children, that are born of his Spirit? 1 John v. 1.

Query 13. Doth not this faith give victory over the world (over the worldly nature and spirit within, over the worldly nature and spirit without also)? Can any other faith give victory? 1 John v. 4.

Query 14. What is the love of God's children? Whence doth it arise? How come they to love? Is it not of a heavenly, spiritual nature? Doth it not arise from God's begetting them, and circumcising their hearts, and teaching them in the Spirit of the new covenant to love him, and one an-

other, yea, and enemies also? 1 John iv. 7. Deut. xxx. 6. 1 Thess. iv. 9.

Query 15. How come the children of God, who are begotten of him, to obey his commandments? Is it not from the constrainings of his love, which makes them natural and easy (where the birth and nature is grown up), and not grievous and burthensome? Mat. xi. 33. 1 John v. 3.

Query 16. What is the fear God puts into the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Is it a fear taught by the precepts of men, or a fear springing from the root of life within? Can any who receive this fear from God, and who are preserved in the sense of it (and in the holy awe and reverence which it produceth), depart from the holy, tender, living God and Father? Jer. xxxii. 40.

Query 17. What is the law which God writes in the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Is it not the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Is it not the law which the isles wait for? Isa. xli. 5. And do the isles wait for it in vain? Oh, blessed be the Lord! by the once distressed and miserable ones, in this age it hath not been waited for in vain.

Query 18. What is the truth that makes free indeed from the law of sin and death? Is it not the truth as it is in Jesus; the inward truth, which hath virtue and power in it, to work against and work out that which is contrary to truth, and so deliver and free the mind from it? For the light, which is truth, can expel darkness; the life, which is truth, can overcome death; yea, the truth, which is living, holy, and righteous, can overcome and subdue the unholy and unrighteous nature, and break down the strong-holds, and bring every rebellious and captivated thought into captivity and subjection. John viii. 32. Rom. viii. 2. Ephes. iv. 20, 21. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Query 19. How doth God cause the children of the new covenant to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them? Is it not by putting his Spirit into them, and by the holy virtue, power, and operation thereof in them? Doth not that make them a willing people in the day of his

power? And doth not that give them to do also, and strengthen them with might in the inner man? So that not grieving that, or quenching that, that is as a flame of life in them, and fills their hearts with joy; and the joy of the Lord is in their strength, and in this joy and strength they can rejoice, and work righteousness, and remember the Lord in his ways. Isa. lxiv. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Query 20. Can any work righteousness, or do righteousness, but he that is truly righteous, inwardly righteous, in whom the righteousness of God, the righteousness of Christ, is revealed from faith to faith? Must not the tree be good, before the fruit can be good? Must not the heart be changed, be made holy and righteous, before it can bring forth that which is holy and righteous? Can any but the plants of God, the plants of righteousness, bring forth the fruits of righteousness? Isa. lxi. 3. and 1 John iii. 7.

Oh that people, nations, tongues, and languages could understandingly, sensibly, and experimentally, as in God's sight, with the seal of his blessed Spirit, answer every one of these things!

Three Queries more added.

Query 1. Dost thou indeed know the new covenant? Hast thou inwardly felt the spiritual, powerful gathering by the mighty arm and power of the Lord, out of the sinful nature and state, into it? Dost thou abide with God therein? Art thou daily taught and fed by him there? These are very weighty things. Can any man be safe or happy without experiencing them? Heb. viii. 8, &c.

Query 2. Hast thou experienced the true hunger and thirst after the living waters? Hast thou been called and led to them? Hast thou eaten and drunk the bread, wine, and milk which those waters yield? Hast thou been abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and hath he given thee to drink of the river of his pleasure? Hath the Lord opened an ear in thee to hear as the learned? And

hast thou inclined thine ear, and come unto him who gives life, and received him who is life, and gives life in that inward, spiritual, living appearance of his in the heart, wherein and whereby he gives life? Hast thou known his appearance inwardly, as of a living stone? Hast thou heard and learned of the Father how to come to him, as to a living stone? And hast thou been new created and formed a living stone by him? And art thou a living stone, built upon him, the living stone inwardly in spirit, daily living in him, and daily receiving spiritual life and virtue from him? If it be thus with thee, then surely thou dost know and enjoy the everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David. Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. Psa. xxxvi. 8, 9. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

Query 3. Dost thou sensibly and experimentally know how the Spirit of the Father begets the child-like life, love, and fear in the heart; and how the pure fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the living child's treasure? And dost thou know what the womb is wherein the living child is formed? what the Jerusalem above is, which is the mother of all that are truly living? and how Christ is formed in all that are begotten, and born of, and live in his Spirit? Isa. xxxiii. 6. Gal. iv. 26. John iii. 6. 8. Gal. iv. 19.

THE CONCLUSION.

Oh, how miserable is he who is deceived about these things! Oh, how happy is he who hath received the true understanding from God, which cannot be deceived! wherein he hath the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit concerning them, and knoweth the truth as it is in Jesus; as it is in his life, in his Spirit, in his power, who ministers after the power of an endless life, unto all his sheep, who are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of the soul, who hear his voice and follow him wherever he goes or leads, who is an eternal Shepherd, and eternal Door of life to his,

and leads to precious pastures, and sweet still streams of life, and is giving the sweet food, rest, and pure pleasure of eternal life unto his abundantly; even as it is his will, that after their many sore trials, exercises, and travels (and faithfulness to him therein), they should abundantly possess and enjoy it. Glory to the Lord for ever, whose kingdom is set up in the hearts of many, and who already reigns in the hearts of many, and will reign in the hearts of more! Oh that men might hear the sound of his everlasting gospel! and learn to fear him, and give glory to him, and know the hour of his judgment come in their own heart, that by his judgment against sin and unrighteousness in them, they might come to know and worship him; and then the worship of the dragon and beast would soon come to an end in their hearts; and they would worship the begetter of holiness, the begetter of life, the King of saints, who dwells and rules in 'those that are his own, as the devil, the destroyer, doth in those that are his! The Lord God of everlasting power break down the kingdom of Satan (the kingdom of unrighteousness and darkness in men's hearts), and exalt the kingdom and sceptre of his own Son instead thereof. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT.

Containing some Queries on Isaiah, L. 10, 11.

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" It is rendered in another translation: "And no light shineth upon him" (which was Job's case in his great affliction, as is signified by him, chap. xxix. 2, 3.). "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." ver. 10.

"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass about with sparks, walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks ye have kindled, this ye shall have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." ver. 11.

Query 1. Doth not the tender and merciful God many times, in the bowels of his love and mercy, bring darkness and great distress upon men's spirits, that they might wait for his healing and redemption? Yea, doth not this befall some who fear the Lord, and are found in the holy reverence and obedience to him? And is it not good that it should befall them?

Query 2. Should not men, in such a condition of darkness and distress, trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon him till he cause light to arise out of obscurity, and comfort them that mourn in Zion; giving them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?

Query 3. Are not persons very prone and liable, in time of darkness and distress, instead of waiting upon God for his help and salvation, to be kindling a fire, and compassing themselves about with sparks?

Query 4. Are there not some who cannot be content without heat and warmth in their religion and performances, and yet, instead of waiting for God's kindling the fire, and

his causing the sparks of life to arise, kindle a fire of themselves, and compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling?

Query 5. May not men, after they have kindled a fire and sparks, walk in the light thereof? And may not God, in his just judgment and sore displeasure against them, leave them to themselves, and give them up to do so?

Query 6. What will God do in the end, or what in the end shall befall them from God, who kindle a fire and sparks, and have continued walking in the light thereof, and have been heated and warmed thereby? Will not God cause them at length to lie down in sorrow? Oh that persons that are serious in religion, might not thus err, and so provoke God to give them up to walk in the light of the fire and sparks of their own kindling?

Query 7. When do men kindle a fire and sparks of their own? Do they not first forget the God of their salvation, and become unmindful of the rock of their strength? And do they not then plant pleasant plants, and set strange slips? (And where do they plant and set them?) But what will the harvest be in the day of inheritance, when they come to reap and inherit what they have planted and sown? (For what a man soweth, that must he also reap.) Will it not be a heap for the fire of God's jealousy to take hold on, in the day of their tribulation, anguish, and desperate sorrow of heart? Isa. xvii. 10, 11.

Query 8. In what light do men build up a wall inwardly, and daub it with untempered mortar, to secure themselves from the wrath to come? Is it not in the light of the fire and sparks of their own kindling? Will any wall or defence built up in the light of this fire or sparks secure men? Will not the wrath of God, in the day thereof, break forth upon all the workers of iniquity, whatever their faith or hope be to the contrary? Will any wall defend the soul from the overflowing storm of wrath, but the wall of God's salvation? And can any enter within that wall, but the righteous nation that keepeth the truth? Isa. xxvi. 1, 2. The name of the Lord indeed is a strong tower; but can

any run into it, and get shelter in it, but the righteous? Prov. xviii. 10.

Query 9. Who is he, who, when he falleth, shall rise again; and after he hath set in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto him? Is it not he that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that in the time of his darkness and distress trusteth in the name of the Lord, and stays upon his God? Yea, is it not such an one as is willing to bear the indignation of the Lord, because he hath sinned against him, until he plead his cause, and execute judgment for him? Will not the Lord bring forth such an one to the light? and shall not such an one behold his righteousness? Mich. vii. 8, 9.

Query 10. When shall persons' light arise in obscurity, and their darkness be as the noon-day? When shall their light break forth as the morning, and their health spring forth speedily, and their righteousness go before them, and the glory of the Lord gather them up? And when shall the Lord be their continual guide, and satisfy their soul in droughts, and make fat their bones, and make them like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not? Are not these promises belonging to the gospel state? And are they not fulfilled in the gospel state, as people come to know and keep the gospel fast, and the gospel sabbath? Read Isa. lviii. 6. to the end, and wait on the Lord, to receive understanding from him, that in reading thou mayst understand.

Oh that men knew the gospel fast, and the gospel sabbath, with the feasts of unleavened bread, tabernacles, trumpets, &c. A little of the knowledge of the mystery of the hidden life and power, is of more value, and would do their souls more good, than heaps of literal knowledge wherewith the world is so filled. The knowledge of God and Christ in the mystery is no less than life eternal, in them and to them, who are taught in the new covenant, or ministration of the power of the endless life, so to know them.

THE

EVERLASTING GOSPEL,

OF

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

AND THE BLESSED EFFECTS THEREOF, TESTIFIED TO FROM EXPERIENCE.

"The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." 1 John ii. 8.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Isai. lx. 1. 2.

"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Psal. cii. 16. (indeed he doth so.)

THE blessed message which the apostles (who were sent by Christ to preach the gospel) heard of Christ, and were to declare to others was, "That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." 1 John i. 5.

The end of Christ's sending them with this message was, that thereby (preaching it in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit) they might "open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in him." Acts xxvi. 18.

Now the eye of the mind being opened, and the mind turned from the darkness within to the light within, and from Satan's power to the power of God, which is revealed in the light, the soul in the light comes to see (over the

darkness, and Satan who darkened it the things of God and his kingdom, as they are revealed in the light, which makes them manifest.

As, First, It sees him, who is the rock, the holy foundation of God, the holy foundation of life in the soul, the living stone, by which all the other living stones are made alive, and they are taught of God to come to him as to a living stone, and so are built upon him, and become God's building, and new creation in him. 1 Pet. ii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. And here, in this light, none can miss of the true coming, hearing the voice of the Father, and being drawn and taught by him to come to the Son. John vi. 44, 45.

Secondly, Here the true Jew's state, the state of the inward Jew, and the inward circumcision, and the true worship (even the worship of the Father in Spirit and truth) is known. For the Jew inward is a child of light, begotten in the light, redeemed out of darkness, and dwells and walks in the light, as God is in the light. 1 John i. 7. And the circumcision is not a fleshly act; but the cutting off of that which is fleshly from the mind by the Spirit and power of Christ. And the gospel worship, or the worship of the Jew inward, is the worshipping of God in the newness of the life of his Son.

Thirdly, Here is the true repentance from the dead nature and dead works, which no man can attain to of himself; but is God's gift through his Son, whom God hath appointed to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Acts v. 31. I say here, that repentance is known, waited for, and received. For not to men in the darkness, and loving the darkness, is the true repentance given; but to them that are turned to the light, to them is repentance given unto life. Acts xi. 18. compared with chap. xxvi. 17, 18.

Fourthly, Here the true faith, the precious gift of faith, is received, whereby men believe in him who gives life, and receive life from him. And this is the faith which gives access to God, and gives victory over the world, and that which is contrary to God: the faith which is given in the

light doth so; but the faith which men have in the darkness doth not so.

Fifthly, Here is the cross of Christ known, which is an inward, living, spiritual thing, effectually crucifying that man that takes it up, and daily bears it, to all that is earthly and sinful; and then the pure seed and life of Christ springs up in his earth, over the world, and every worldly thing. Gal. vi. 14.

Sixthly, Here the pure love springs in the heart, both to him that begets, and to him that is begotten. In the light there is nothing but love; but in the darkness there is no true love to be found; but the very love that is found there is of the nature of enmity. It is the light of truth that purifieth the heart to the love unfeigned. 1 Pet. i. 22. Deut. xxx. 6.

Seventhly, Here the Lamb's patience and meekness is experienced, and the soul adorned with it. The Lamb is the light of the world, and they that are made lambs by him, partake of his sweet and meek nature, learning of him to be meek and lowly in heart, and so have that patience and meekness from him *which no other can attain to.* Mat. xi. 29.

Eighthly, In the light the precious promises are fulfilled and partaken of; which make them who partake of them, and in whom they are fulfilled, partakers of the divine nature; for the divine nature is not partaken of in the darkness, but in him who is light. Man (who is darkness) cannot partake of the promises which belong to the children of light; but when, by the operation of God's power, his state and nature are changed, and he is now no more darkness, but light in the Lord, then the promises which were made to the children of light he cometh to have a share in. Eph. v. 8. 2 Pet. i. 4.

Lastly, In the light the holy anointing is received, the voice of Christ heard, and the new everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David, made with the soul. Isa. lv. 3. The law of the new covenant (even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) written in the mind, and the

holy fear of the new covenant, which cleanseth and keepeth clean, put in the heart, and the blessed Spirit of the Father given and received, which gives to those that receive it power to become the sons of God, causing them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and to do them. Oh, blessed dispensation of life and holy power, which the Lord hath caused to break forth among a despised people in these latter days! Oh that the sons of men would hear and understand this precious loving-kindness of the Lord, and put their trust under the shadow of his wings, and know what it is to be satisfied with the fatness of his spiritual gospel house, and to drink of the river of his pleasures, and in his light to see light! Psa. xxxvi. 7, 8, 9.

This opened in me this morning, in love and compassion towards the Papists. My bowels have often rolled over them, and been pained concerning them, to see how they are closed and shut up as to the true sense and understanding of things of this nature. Oh that they would prize the day of their visitation, that they might hear the sound of life both from others, and also in their own hearts, and the saving arm of the Lord might be inwardly revealed to them, and they effectually redeemed thereby!

I am no disdainer of Papists, or any sort of Protestants, nay, not of Turks or Jews; but a mourner because of their several mistakes, and a breather to the God of my life for tender mercy towards them all.

Astrop, 13th of the Seventh month, 1678.

POSTSCRIPT.

And in this light the true church, the gospel church, the New Testament church, is known; which is a church of the children of light, a building built in the light, which church is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ; 2 Thess. i. 1. in whom they are built together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit. Eph. ii. 22. Yea, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy

temple in the Lord, ver. 21. (for the Lord frameth them fitly together into a spiritual and holy building). And all that are here gathered out of the darkness into the light, who walk in the light, and abide in the light, are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, ver. 20. and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, ver. 19.

The gospel church is the spiritual house of Jacob, which walk in the light of the Lord, Isa. ii. 5. who go up to the mountain of the Lord (to that which is revealed to be the mountain of God in the last days, even spiritual Mount Zion, Heb. xii. 22.), to the house of the God of Jacob, where he teacheth his spiritual people, the inward Jews, of his ways, and they learn to walk in his paths; for out of this Zion shall go forth the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (in the days of the gospel), and the word of the Lord from this Jerusalem, ver. 2, 3. For Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of all the children which are born of God's Spirit. Gal. iv. 26. John iii. 6. And she being the mother of them all, nourisheth them all with the Word of life, which goeth forth from her; and all her children know and justify her, their mother. Mat. xi. 19. Oh that all, both Papists and Protestants, knew this true mother-church, this mother of all the living, of whom none but the living are born, and who nourisheth all the liying, and none else, with the law and Word of eternal life!

And if they knew the true church, the church which is of the true Jews, the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and did live and walk in the light of the Lamb, and follow the Leader, the Shepherd of Israel, and faithful Bishop of the soul, who overseeth and taketh care of the soul, they would learn, and come to know and experience these things following:—

First, The dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and her assemblies, and God's creating upon every of them a *cloud and smoke* by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, which is the defence upon all the glory that the Lord bring-

eth forth among his spiritual church and people. Isa. iv. 5.

Secondly, They would know the land of the inward Jews, and spiritual Judah, and the song sung therein, because of the strong city which the Lord builds there, and the salvation which he appoints for walls and bulwarks about it; and would see and know how none but the inward Jews, the inwardly circumcised and sanctified, even the righteous nation, that keepeth the truth, can enter by the gates into that city. Isa. xxvi. 1, 2. And they that dwell in that city, whose minds are staid on the Lord, and who trust in him, the Lord will keep in perfect peace, ver. 3. Then Jerusalem is a quiet habitation indeed, and the resting and feeding-places in it are sure. Isa. xxxii. 18. and chap. xxxiii. 15. 20.

Thirdly, They would know the feast of fat things, which the Lord of hosts makes to all people that are here; to all people that come up to and dwell on his holy mountain, and serve and worship him in Spirit and truth. The Lord of hosts maketh such a feast as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what it is, but only by the Spirit of God; even a feast of fat things, even a feast of spiritual fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. Isa. xxv. 6. They that are turned to the light, and follow Christ the light, shall not abide in darkness, but have the light of life; John viii. 12. shall be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son, and they shall sup with Christ, and he with them, and both together drink of the fruit of the vine of life new in the Father's kingdom.

Fourthly, They shall infallibly know here, in this light which shines on God's holy mountain, the destroying or swallowing up of the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations. Isa. xxv. 7. For the veil is cast over and spread in the darkness; but is done away and swallowed up in Christ, the light: for the veil is done away in him. 2 Cor. iii. 14. And all that are in Christ, in his Spirit, in the light and liberty thereof, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same

image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. ver. 17, 18.

Lastly, Here the King of righteousness' highway is known, even the way of holiness, which the unclean cannot pass over; but the sanctified in the light do walk in; and the wayfaring men here, though fools, do not err in. Isa. xxxv. 8. For they that are taught of God in the new covenant, and follow the leading of his blessed Spirit, do not err.

Oh that the true church were known, which is now come and coming out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved, who led and leads her out thence, into her own land of life and glory, where her light shines, and she ariseth and standeth upon her feet before the Lord, and the glory of the Lord shines upon her, and covers her! Happy is the eye that seeth this, and the soul that hath a share in it!

LETTERS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON.

To Nathaniel Stonar.

Dear Friend,

There is somewhat on my heart to express to thee, in love and great good-will, which is as followeth:—

Would it not be sad, if thou should perish from the Lord for ever? If thou err in heart from the living way, it may be so: indeed, if thy mind be not turned from darkness, inward darkness, to the inward light of God's Spirit, it cannot be otherwise. Now, if thou feel the inward light, the power of the pure light, and art changed thereby, thou canst not speak against that light.

There was no true religion in the apostles' days, without turning to the inward light, and to that the true ministry was sent to turn men: nor is there any true religion now, without being inwardly turned to and walking in the same light: nor canst thou try any truth, or understand any scripture aright, but in the light of God's Spirit. No man can understand the things of God but the Spirit of God. The Scriptures are holy words, and treat of the things of God which no man can understand but in a light of the same nature from which they came: and when once a man comes to the true understanding, he soon finds that the understanding which he had of the same before was but after the flesh, even short of the nature of the true understanding. And, friend, consider if thy knowledge, which thou hast hitherto had, hath changed or doth change the nature of thy understanding and will; or is thy old understanding and will yet remaining, notwithstanding all thy knowledge and practices in religion? Oh, do not dally in things of so *great concernment!* lest thou repent too late: for I do not tell thee what I see concerning thee, in the light of God's eternal Spirit: but I would fain have thine own eye, or rather the right eye in thee, opened and brought to see.

And consider one scripture seriously concerning the church of Laodicea: had it not the true knowledge outwardly, and a true church state, and right ordinances? Did it not believe in Christ, and look up to him for justification, &c.? Nay, what did it want, as to the outwardness of its state? But it wanted sense, life, warmth, inwardly. So that, if ye had all ordinances and truths of the gospel light outwardly; yet, if ye wanted the inward power, ye could not but want the *tried gold*, the *white raiment*, and *eye-salve:* and so, though ye might think yourselves rich, &c., yet *the shame of your nakedness* would *appear:* yea, indeed, the nakedness of such as are not clothed with God's Spirit, doth appear to the Lord, and to the eyes and spirits of his children, which he openeth in his own light, and who see with this eye,—I say the shame of their nakedness doth appear, notwithstanding all the religious covers they can put upon

themselves. Oh that thou hadst desires, living desires, after the nature of truth, and wert acquainted with the new nature, which can be satisfied with nothing but the virtue, life, and power of truth!

Come, friend, wait on the Lord, to have the old nature, the old spirit, mind, wisdom, understanding, and will broken, the old garment torn to pieces; that thou mayst come to experience that which is new, pure, and living; and find the new vessel filled with that which is new; and know the virgin state of spirit, and the savor of the true ointment. For life savors life, and death savors death, and living words are but the savor of death to them that are out of the life; and the living stone, which is the foundation of life to us, and very precious, is but a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, to them that are out of the life; and who judge of things by their apprehensions of the letter, without the Spirit of life and power. As the Scribes and Pharisees formerly did, and so condemned Christ in his appearance in the flesh; those who judge after that manner now cannot but condemn his spiritual appearance in the hearts of his children. The letter killeth: the Spirit gives life. If thou wilt have life, thou must come to that which gives life. If thou wilt come into the ministration of the new testament, thou must come into the Spirit and power; and know the letter of the Scriptures, in the Spirit and power which wrote them, if ever thou know them aright. Yea, if thou wilt become a son of God, thou must receive power from Christ so to do; and if thou wilt believe aright, thou must feel faith wrought in thy heart, by that very power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead: all other faith falls short of the nature of true faith.

If thou receive from the Lord the true sense of these things, thou wilt bless his name for engaging my heart to write them to thee; but if thou read them out of that which gives the true understanding, they cannot be of advantage to thee. But whatever entertainment they have with thee, yet my judgment is with the Lord, and my work and labor of love with my God, who is my strength and joy; in whom

my soul rests in peace, in the bosom of my Beloved. And oh that thou also mightst feel quickenings of life and true leadings! and thus be acquainted with that faithful travel which leads thither.

Thy friend in the heartiness of true love, so far as the Lord pleaseth to make use of me towards thee,

I. P.

7th of the Fourth Month, 1671.

POSTSCRIPT.

The apostle speaks of the state of the Gentiles, before they were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God! that their understanding was darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the hardness of their heart; not that that which might be known of God was not manifest in them; but their ignorance was because of their hardness in not minding it, not turning to it, and so they became alienated from the life, and their understanding not opened by it.

Now, in this state, men are without God, without Christ, strangers to the covenant of promise, and without any true hope of salvation; and this state, they are as really in, who get a form of godliness without the power, as the very natural heathen. For nothing makes a true Christian, but the life and power: and he that doth not hear the voice of Christ's Spirit in his heart is no better than a heathen and a publican. Yea, any church, built up out of the life and power,—nay, a church, though built by the power, yet, if not preserved in the same, is not better than a synagogue of Satan. They that say they are Jews, but are not so; ministers of Christ, but are not, and do lie; alas! what are they? Oh, how precious is life! how precious is the power of God, in which the churches of old stood, and the true churches at this day stand!

It is precious, to know the Spirit of the living God, to be begotten by him in the life, which is true and pure, to be separated from death and the power thereof, and to be mar-

ried to life and the power thereof,—to be married to the conquering Lamb, who triumphed over sin and death in his body of flesh, and, by his Spirit and power, delivers his spouse from the strength and dominion of them. And it is precious to walk with the Lamb, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; who always leads out of sin and unrighteousness, into ways of purity and righteousness, into the path which is prepared for the ransomed, where there is no danger of erring, no, not so much as to the wayfaring ones, though fools. Isa. xxxv. 8.

Oh! is it not precious experimentally to read that scripture, and to be able in true understanding to say, The way of life is easy, the yoke easy, the burden easy, the commandment not grievous; *that* being brought down and subdued in me,—yea, removed and cast out,—to which it was hard? Alas! men building in the flesh, and after their carnal apprehensions of things, how loathsome is it! but God's building, raised in the light and life of his pure Spirit, how glorious, how beautiful, how lovely, is it, even in the eye of God himself! "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." Sol. Song iv. 7. Into thy holy building, O God! into thy heavenly building, into the spiritual Jerusalem, which thou rearest and buildest up in the Spirit, no unclean or defiled thing can enter; nor is there any room there for that which loves and makes a lie! Without, indeed, are swine and dogs, vulturous eyes and crooked serpents, who make a show of what they are not, and lay claim to that which belongs not to them; but within are the children, within is the heavenly birth, even the new creation of God in Christ Jesus. For God doth not strip his people naked, and gather them out of the spirit of this world, that they should be empty and desolate for ever; but he gathers them into, and fills them with, his own Spirit, fills them with light, fills them with life, fills them with holiness, fills them with righteousness, fills them with peace and joy, in believing and obeying the gospel! And in this Spirit is the kingdom known, which is not of this world, the inward kingdom, the spiritual kingdom, the everlasting kingdom, where the

everlasting throne is near, and the everlasting power revealed; and the Lord God Omnipotent reigns in the hearts of his, and other lords do not reign, but their horns are broken; and the horn of God's Anointed exalted, who sits ruling as King on his holy hill of Zion; and they that have suffered with him, and gone through great tribulation, do reign with him: blessed be his name for ever!

I. P.

10th of Fourth Month.

To Catharine Pordage.

Friend,

It is true, the way to life is so difficult and intricate, that none can find it, but such as are lighted by the Lord, and follow the guidance of his Spirit.

Christ, who preached the kingdom, and bid men seek it, yet said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." In a race many run, but one obtaineth the prize. Canst thou read what Christ said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you"? that seemed a hard saying to some of his own disciples, many of whom left him. And truly, friend, as it is not an easy thing to come into the way, so neither is it an easy thing to abide in the way; for many are the by-paths, many and great the temptations, both on the right hand and on the left. The way was always the same, full as difficult and hard formerly as now; but the states and conditions of some make it harder to them than it is to others; yea, it is easier now than it hath been in many foregoing generations, being prepared and cast up by the Lord.

It is sad indeed that any should be convinced of truth, and not come into subjection to it; yet it is very easy and common. For men cannot withstand conviction, when it comes in power; but they may deny obedience to that which they are convinced of; nay, some in the apostles' day went further, even to taste of the heavenly gift, and

powers of the world to come, and to partake of the Holy Ghost, and yet fall away. Was not this very sad? and yet this was no well-grounded objection against the truth and way of God then. Indeed, I make little of the illumination of the understanding, without subjection to him that illuminateth, in those things wherein he illuminateth. But that is a great mistake, to suppose I did condemn any waiting or praying, that is according to a true illumination and leading of God's Spirit; for the true light and Spirit are not separated; but the exceptions I have against the prayers of professors is, that they are so much out of the true illumination, in a light of their own apprehending, forming, and conceiving. Now these are but the limits of the fleshly birth, out of which comes nothing that is pleasing to the Father.

Did I, or any of us, ever affirm, that the forbearance of the means was the way to attain the end? But the setting up or using a false means is not the way to attain the true end. "So run," said the apostle, "that ye may obtain." Did he not forbid all running, but the right running? The praying of the fleshly birth, or in the will, and according to the wisdom of the flesh, is not the means or way to obtain the everlasting kingdom; but the prayers of the true birth are. And if I should say thus again and again to thee, So pray, as that thou mayest obtain what thou prayest for, I should not be thine enemy therein; for it is easy asking amiss, not so easy to ask aright. Prayer is a gift; and he that receiveth it, must first come to the sense of his own inability, and so wait to receive; and perhaps begin but with a groan or sigh from the true Spirit, and thus grow in ability from the same Spirit, denying the ability which is after the flesh: this latter abounds in many, who mistake and err in judgment, not waiting on the Lord, to be enabled by him rightly to judge and distinguish between flesh and spirit, but are many times willingly ignorant in this particular, it will cost so dear to come to a true understanding therein.

Hath not all flesh had some manifestation of God's Spirit allotted it? was not that which might be known of God manifest in the Gentiles? and ought not all flesh, in that, to

call upon the Lord, as the true sense is given them therefrom? But because of this, might the heathen pray according to their own imagination? Is there not a rule of prayer? Is not God's light, God's gift, God's Spirit, the rule to all? Is any prayer required or accepted out of this? Indeed, he that hath the sense of being but a dog, as I may say, and not worthy to be counted a child, yet may pray for crumbs, and be heard, and receive them. But what are prayers, out of the light and life of God's Spirit? are they not prayers of the fleshly birth, fleshly will, fleshly wisdom? can they that are in the flesh, or pray in the flesh, please God? Oh, forsake thy own wisdom, reasonings, will, and desires! that thou mayst come to true understanding in this particular.

As to stirring up the gift, 2 Tim. i. 6. Paul knew to whom he wrote: Timothy had a great understanding, and both knew the gift, and how to stir it up; but he that hath not a true understanding, may stir up somewhat else, instead of stirring up the gift, and so kindle a fire of his own, and offer up his own sacrifice, with his own fire, neither of which are acceptable to the Lord.

The troubled soul is not only to go to the Lord, but it must be taught by him, *how* to go to Him. The Lord is the Teacher; and *this* is a great lesson, which the soul cannot learn of itself, but as it is taught by him. Men abound in their several ways in religion, in that which God is arising to scatter and confound; so that it is not the great and main work to be found *doing*, but to be found doing *aright*, from the true teachings, and from the right Spirit.

In the time of great trouble, there may be life stirring underneath, and a true and tender sense, and pure desires, in which there may be a drawing nigh and breathing of heart to the Lord; but, in the time of trouble and great darkness, may not a man easily desire amiss, and pray amiss, if he have not his Guide? A little praying from God's Spirit, and in that which is true and pure, is better than thousands of vehement desires in one's own will, and after the flesh. For as long as a man prayeth thus, that which should die in him, lives in his very prayers; and how shall it ever be destroyed,

if it get food and gain strength there? But life and virtue may be felt, and that which troubleth be near too, and greatly troubling. Did Christ feel neither life nor virtue, in the time of his great trouble?

We neither lay weight on outward things, as considered in themselves, nor take off from the inward. Ah! consider what spirit this charge comes from; and if thou discern it, take heed of joining to it, and bringing forth the fruits of it any more. What if God hath chosen weak and foolish things to the eye of man's wisdom, now, as formerly? Do we, in so testifying, lay any more weight thereupon, than God layeth? And what if God hath thrown by all preachings, prayings, singings (yea inward), which are not in his Spirit, but from the transforming spirit and birth. Do we herein debase, or testify against, any thing that is inwardly of God? The *outward* which is right in God's sight, must come from the *inward*, but not from the inward will or wisdom of the flesh, but from the inward light and Spirit of God; but it is a great matter to receive singly and go along with the inward light, and avoid the inward, deceitful appearance of things.

There is one thing hath been with me all along still, throughout thy letter, even a cry to thee for obedience, obedience to the Spirit and power of the Lord; and to consider, whether disobedience hath not drawn this darkness and power of the enemy upon thee. It is not thy proper work, to look out at the way, or think it hard (for it is not so to the true seed), but to be travelling in faithfulness, as thou art drawn and led; and this will save thee much sorrow.

As for Christ being a Mediator and Reconciler, it is by his death and life; both of which are partaken of, in the light which comes from him, even in the grace and truth which he dispenseth. For as God wrought all in him by the fulness which he bestowed on him, so he works all in his by a measure of the same Spirit, life, and power. But why dost thou so desire to be able to comprehend and reason about these things?—that is not thy present work, but to feel after and be joined to that, whereby Christ reneweth and chang-

eth the mind, and wherein he gives the knowledge of his good and acceptable, and perfect will. Take heed of being exalted above measure, or desiring to know the things of the kingdom after the flesh; for it is better to lie low, and as a child to enter the kingdom, and to receive the knowledge of the things of God there, than to be feeding that knowing mind, which is to be kept out and famished.

Ah! watch, that thou mayst not lose thy Leader, and meet with the deceiver, instead of Him that is true; and so go back from light, life, truth, and power, instead of going forward toward them. Indeed, this letter of thine makes me afraid, as Paul speaketh to the Galatians, lest I have bestowed labor on thee in vain; for there seems to me to be in thee, a strengthening of thy mind towards returning back to that, from which the Lord in his mercy hath been redeeming and gathering thee. If thou feel the right seed, and come to be of the right seed, the way of the seed will not be too hard for thee; otherwise it will.

This is to thee, in love and grief, from thy soul's true friend, I. P.

21st of Sixth Month, 1671.

To Catharine Pordage and another.

Friends,

Take heed of that spirit, which will be stirring up hard thoughts in you of God and his way, and the faithful testimony thereof, when, in the tender mercy of the Lord, it is given forth to you; for that spirit is your soul's enemy. Wait, therefore, to know in yourselves that which is to stumble, and fall, and be snared, and broken, and taken; for it cannot receive God's truth.

And take care of that spirit which hateth reproof; for the reproofs of instruction are the ways of life, and whom the Lord loves, he rebukes and chastens. And truly, friends, this is God's truth in my heart to you both, this morning: the ministration of conviction and reproof is that which ye

are to come under: and it is your proper state to wait daily, not for comforts, not for refreshments (that day is to come afterwards), but for convictions and reproofs of that in you which is contrary to God. And if ye walk faithfully in this dispensation, ye shall in due time know another, when the work of this is over; for really, friends, ye must be emptied of that wherewith ye are now filled, before ye can be filled with that which is true and living. If I should say one word to you, could ye bear it? and yet this counsel is with me towards you: Oh! wait for, receive, embrace, be glad of, that which reproves you, and be afraid of that which comforts you in your present state; for ye are to come through the trouble, judgment, breaking down, plucking up, consuming, and burning of the contrary nature and spirit, which yet deceives you; and to witness all the knowledge, profession, practices, beliefs, hopes, that are founded there, and spring up thence, confounded and destroyed, before ye can possibly come into the true ministration of life and power. Ye must die to your own wisdom, if ever ye will be born of and walk in the wisdom of God. Yea, ye must die to that part, that is so active from and in that wisdom, and which would be laboring in the very fire for what is but vanity, if ye will receive the knowledge, which springs out of truth and life itself, which indeed flows over and covers the earth of God's heritage, as the waters cover the sea, in this day of his great goodness and plentiful redemption.

When we were in desolation and great distress, indeed, unutterable, we had none of these helps and instructions, which abound towards you. Oh, what a day of mercy have you met with! and how great will be your condemnation, if ye become as deaf adders to the Spirit of the Lord, and so miss of his salvation. And if ye will ever know the Spirit of the Lord, ye must meet with him, as a searcher and reprover, in your own hearts; yea, the merciful God must ye meet with, as a severe Judge, and unquenchable, consuming fire against that spirit, wisdom, knowledge, and faith in you, which is but of a chaffy nature. Truly, friends, it is

far better to be stripped of it, than to find any rest or pleasure in it.

Oh, hear the voice of the living God! His word is nigh, nigh you; and his word hath a voice that speaks. Oh that the ear that *can* hear might be opened in you! and the ear stopped which *will* not *cannot* hear the voice of the Shepherd! Oh, wait for the Reprover! and turn the ear to him, letting in his reproofs, and turning from what he reproves for, without murmuring, without disputing; and the exercise of that ear will open it more and more: so that ye will come to know the voice more and more; which, though it prove very bitter to that which is of a contrary nature, and would not hear the voice, yet will be sweet, yea, sweeter and sweeter daily, to the true birth. And here, ye will witness true death to that which is to die; and true life, ministered by Him who lives for ever, to that which is to live.

But while ye are striving to comprehend, and to begin obedience after that wisdom, ye will find the power, which opens to others, shutting you out from that which is true; and yourselves liable to be tempted, and persuaded to esteem and take up that which is false, instead of that which is true.

What spirit is that in you, which prejudices your hearts inwardly against, and makes you apt to cry out [because] of, destroying? Is it not that spirit, which would save alive what is to be destroyed in you, that your souls might live in and to God? The Lord discover to you, how the enemy works in you, against the life and salvation of your souls; for he knows what will be the issue of this destroying work, if it have its thorough course and effect upon you; and that none of his kingdom will be left standing in you.

I. P.

7th of Seventh Month, 1671.

To ——— ———

Dear Friend,

Some Scriptures did spring up and open in my heart towards thee this morning.

One was, that of 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, and 6. That which was chiefly on my heart therefrom, was about the fulfilling of obedience. First, there is a knowing the will of God; a waiting to know and understand from God, what is his holy, good, perfect, and acceptable will. Then, as God gives the knowledge, he requires obedience; which is to be learned of God in the new spirit and life. For in the old nature, mind and spirit, there is nothing but darkness and disobedience; in the new creation is the new obedience. So that there is first a beginning of knowledge in the Spirit, a beginning of faith in the renewing power, and a beginning of obedience (in the same) to him that calls. Then there is an increase of knowledge, of true, pure, living knowledge, an increase of faith, and a growing more and more obedient under the exercises, judgments and chastisements of the Father's Spirit: even till, at length, the soul comes to witness a full readiness, skill, and strength (in and through Christ, in and through the measure of the gift of grace received from him), to obey in all things. When the new birth is thus grown up into strength and dominion, into the stature of a man in Christ; then the senses, which have been long exercised in discerning between good and evil, grow strong: and there is a quick discerning in the fear of the Lord, and an authority in his name and power, over the enemy and his temptations: so that every strong hold is broken down, every imagination and false reasoning concerning the truth, is subjected and broken by the evidence and power of truth, every thought brought under, into captivity, even to the obedience of Christ; with a readiness to reject all unbelief and disobedience, that will so much as offer to rise up. Now, is not this the Christian state, which God would have his children aim and arrive at? and are

not they blessed who witness it; and doth not the true ministration of the gospel light, Spirit, and power lead to it? and should any be at rest in their spirits, in an easeful, formal, dry, dead profession without it?

Another Scripture was 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, 4, and 5. It is precious to witness the state of a new-born babe, to be begotten to God by the word of life and power, even by the word which God ingrafts into the heart. Oh, what living desires then are there after that which nourisheth the birth of life, which God breathes from his own Spirit, and begets the soul into! Now as the birth is pure, so the nourishment is pure—pure milk from the pure word,—sincere, unmixed milk from the word of life,—from the breast of life. Who is it that begets to God? It is the Spirit, the Word, the second Adam, he whose name is the Word of God. Who is the mother of these children? It is the heavenly wisdom, the Jerusalem which is above. ("Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." "Wisdom is justified of her children.") Now, who feeds these children? who nourisheth, who brings them up? Why, the mother which bare them, she holds forth the breast of life to them, she yields to them the pure milk of the word. The new-born babes, they long for it, they cry for their food, they earnestly desire after it; and the tender mother gives it forth to them, even the milk of the breast of life from the pure word of life; and by this they grow. But how came the babes to desire after such pure, sincere, unmixed food? Oh! they have "tasted that the Lord is gracious." They have had the heavenly taste, they have tasted that which was living and pure from God, from his tender mercy and grace, wherein he ministers life and salvation. Oh, the remembrance and sense of the sweetness of this is upon their palates! Oh, how precious and living is it, when it comes new and fresh from him! the words which he speaks, they are still spirit and life to the soul. How can they but desire, that from the breast of life, from the heavenly wisdom and divine knowledge of his Father, he would minister unto them of the pure food, that they may know and feed on the

truth as it is in Jesus? Here they come to him as unto a living fountain, and a living stone, disallowed indeed, and rejected of the builders after the flesh, in all ages and generations; but chosen of God, and precious to all that have the true sense and understanding. They come thus to him daily, and so are built up into a living house, or spiritual temple and dwelling-place for God. He, the foundation stone, the corner stone, the top stone, the hope and crown of their glory; they, living stones in him, quickened and kept alive in and by him, and shining in his light and glory.

A third Scripture was Eph. vi. 10, 11, 12, and 13. Is not this a precious state, to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might"? to know "the whole armor of God," and to put it on and stand armed against the strength of the enemy, and to overcome him? was there ever such a state witnessed? Yea: John writeth to the young men in his time, because they had "overcome the wicked one." (Compare 1 John, ii. 14, with Eph. vi. 10.) May not such a thing be again witnessed, even now, in these our days? Were not he a messenger of good tidings to thee, who from God could tell thee, how thou mightest come to know, to put on, to fight in this holy armor, and thereby overcome all the adversaries of thy soul? Doth not the apostle say, "The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God"? Wouldst not thou be willing to witness them so in thee? Mind then, in the measure of life, in the measure of grace and truth which is from Christ, all the knowledge, strength, and use of the armor lie. Thus the truth as it is in Jesus is the girdle of the loins; and from and through him, in his pure measure of life, righteousness springs up as a breastplate. There likewise, the feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; for there, the gospel, the life, the redeeming power and virtue is always in readiness, whenever the Lord seeth service for it. And then, the shield of faith is known, which quencheth the fire of the enemy's temptations. There also is the helmet of salvation, the true hope; for in it, Christ, the hope of glory, is revealed, and felt to be near. And then, the sword of the Spirit is wit-

nessed, which is the living Word, the Spirit which quickens and gives life; which Word is quick, piercing, and exceeding powerful, able to smite and wound death. (See Rev. i. 16. Isai. xxvii. 1. and xi. 4. and 2 Thes. ii. 8.) And here, is pure praying in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, and watching thereunto with perseverance, both for itself in particular, and the whole body of the faithful in general; but for those more especially, on whom lies the weight of the service in and towards the body: so that here, is prayer in its due season, weight, and order offered up to God, in true life and understanding: which prayer God always heareth.

Oh, mind this thing diligently, for it is of great concernment to thee! In the grace of the gospel, in the measure of truth and life from the quickening Word, thou meetest with the whole armor of God. Thou mayst there know it, thou mayst there put it on, stand armed with it, and fight with success against thy soul's enemies. Out of this, thou mayst get apprehensions in thy mind about it, but canst never truly know it, canst never come at it, or be covered and armed with it, to stand and fight successfully and victoriously against the enemies of thy soul.

Ah! little dost thou know the loving kindness of the Lord in visiting thee with his truth, in giving thee a sense beyond others, in so tenderly drawing and inviting thy heart; or what this will come to, if thou faithfully give up to hearken to and follow him.

I. P.

20th of Tenth Month, 1671.

To Widow Hemmings.

There are two or three scriptures now on my heart to lay before thee; and it is the desire of my soul, that thou mayst so know the Lord, and so receive his Son, as that thou mayst experience them.

The first is in Prov. v. 15: "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."

The second is the words of Christ: John vii. 38. "He that

believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers (or streams) of living waters." For "there is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God."

The third is that of John iv. 14. where Christ signifies, that whosoever drinketh of the water which he giveth, shall never thirst more after water from without, but shall for ever thenceforward be satisfied with the springings up of the well of life from within.

To these I may add the precious promise of the sweet state of the gospel: Isa. xii. 3. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The outward Jew drew the outward water from the outward wells: they had the upper springs, and the nether springs outwardly; but the inward Jew, in the light of the gospel day, draws inward water out of the inward wells with joy. The thirsting after it, when the soul could not meet with it, was a time of great sorrow and perplexity; but when the river of life is found, when the well of life is received, and the water springs up, the soul draws it from the spring, and drinks it with unspeakable joy. This metaphor, or similitude, is explained by the evangelist John, in chap. vii. ver. 39. The receiving of the Spirit, the receiving of the substance, belongs to the Christian's state, as the receiving of the figures did to the Jew's state. When the Spirit is received, the river, the well of life, is received; and then the waters thereof flow, and are drawn and drunk of. Now, the primitive Christians did receive the Spirit, not only in gifts and manifestations, but as a fountain of life and heavenly virtue dwelling within them. Rom. viii. 9. And as he dwelt in them, so life sprang up from him,—peace, joy, knowledge, virtue, wisdom, power, &c.; even the peace which passeth all man's understanding, and joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. The presence of God was with these, and they knew the times of refreshment, even the times of consolation from the holy Comforter.

These things are witnessed now again, in the preaching of the same everlasting gospel, by the same eternal Spirit and power which preached it at first. For though the ves-

sels in which the power appears are contemptible *now*, to the professors and wise ones of this age, as they were *then*, to the professors and wise ones of that age; yet it is the same treasure of life which is hid, and at times is made manifest, revealed in and through the earthen vessels: blessed be the Lord! of whom is the excellency of the glory, and not of us, who are but instruments and vessels in his hand. Now, seeing the Lord hath given us to partake of the riches of his grace, and of the precious treasures of life in his Son, and of his everlasting kingdom, we cannot hold our peace; but are required of him to proclaim the day of the Lord, the day of the gospel, even the everlasting day, which never shall have an end; and invite to the waters of life, the pure, still streams of Shiloh, which our souls drink of, and are satisfied with; especially to such as now thirst after them, as *our* souls once vehemently did, and were near failing through the extremity of thirst; which thirst, or desire, for the nature of it (blessed be the Lord!), is not lost or extinguished, but satisfied. And so the spouse having heard the Spirit inviting to the waters, being taught by Him to come to and drink of the living streams, daily also enjoying life and sweetness therefrom,—now she cries also to her fellow-travellers, to the weary and thirsty ones: Oh come, saith she, to the fountain of life, which I mourned after, and languished for want of! oh, taste the sweetness of my Beloved, for whom my soul fainted, when I could not find him! So that not only the Spirit of the living God saith, Come; but the bride also saith, Come; for the fountain is not now sealed any longer, but open through the tender mercies of our God, for every thirsty soul; that whosoever hath a will kindled in him by the Lord may come to drink of the water of life freely.

Oh! drink then no longer at the muddy streams of your own conceivings and imaginations, with which, that which inwardly thirsts after the living God, and his pure streams of life, cannot be satisfied (it is not the true seed, it is another birth which is satisfied with these things, before the fountain of life comes to be opened in the heart); but wait

on the Lord, retire in spirit to be gathered into his light which he causes to shine in the heart, and into his Son's life and Spirit, which he manifesteth and revealeth there; that ye may eat that which is good, and be satisfied with the fatness of his house, and drink of the river of his pleasures. For indeed, the Lord, in this his gospel day, doth make to his children a feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined, on his holy mountain, even in the kingdom which cannot be shaken; and the Beloved doth not only knock at the door of the heart, but comes in, and sups with his, and they with him.

I. P.

16th of Eighth Month, 1672.

To Thomas and Ann Mudd.

Dear Friends,

Of whose love to me, I have been and am sensible, and to whom I bear true love.

When I was last at Rickmansworth, it was on my heart to visit you; and while I was there with you, true and living breathings did spring up in my heart to the Lord for you. Since, I have often thought of you, and in my desires have wished well concerning you, as concerning my own soul.

Your days here cannot be long; and what ye sow here ye must reap when ye go out of this world. Oh that ye may now so sow to the Spirit of God, as that ye may then reap of him life everlasting!

Last first day, my wife had a letter of George Fox's sent her, which I heard read that night. In the reading of it, I had many thoughts respecting you, and a desire that ye might sincerely and uprightly, without prejudice, peruse it; which I sent unto you the next day for that end. Now, this morning ye were upon my heart; and two or three things rose up in me in reference to you, as very necessary for you, that ye may be safe, and that it may go well with you for ever.

One was, that ye keep steadfast in that holy testimony of truth, which was given forth among us at the beginning. For *this* truth is the same, and the testimony of it doth not vary or pass away, but shall last throughout ages and generations, to redeem all that receive it, and are faithful to it. The testimony was, to draw from outward, dead knowledge, and out of dead practices and worships after men's own conceivings, into an inward principle, and into worship in Spirit and truth, both inwardly in the heart, and outwardly in the assemblies of God's gathering.

The second was, that ye keep in the sense, esteem, and sanctified use of those holy instruments which God hath made choice of, both to gather and build up his called and chosen ones. It was never well with Israel, when they slighted Moses (though they many times had exceptions against him), nor when they despised the prophets, whom God sent afterwards (though they were often prejudiced against them also); nor was it well with any of the churches, when, by the subtlety and seeming simplicity of those that endeavored to betray them, or by any other means, they were drawn to think meanly of any of the apostles or ministers of Christ, in their day. And the Lord, who preserved Moses in *his* day, and the prophets in *their* day, and the apostles and holy ministers of truth in the first promulgation of the gospel, is the same God still; and doth and will preserve those whom he hath in this age sent forth to publish his everlasting gospel, and to gather his lambs and scattered sheep into holy gatherings and assemblies.

The third was, that ye be daily exercised, guided, and your hearts opened and quickened, by the principle and Spirit of truth; that so ye may know what it is, to walk with the Lord, and to feel the power of the Lord, and enjoy the presence of the Lord; and be led by him out of, and away from, the mysterious workings of the power and spirit of darkness inwardly. For if, through grievous mistake, ye let this into your minds and spirits, instead of the Spirit of truth, ye must needs call darkness light, and light darkness; truth error, and error truth; and so will err from that which

is indeed the way, into somewhat which, in God's sight, is not so. For there is a spirit of delusion as well as of truth; this works in the heart as a minister of righteousness, in a seeming light, and warming the heart with a wrong fire, brings it into a wrong bed of rest, and administers to it a wrong peace, hope, and joy; setting up there a wrong sense, belief, and judgment concerning itself and others. This leads to separate from them that are true, and joins to them that are false; draws from the assemblies and worships of God's gathering, and begets prejudices against, and hard thoughts of, those who are owned by the Lord, and are kept in their habitation by him, who dwells in them, and they in him.

O my friends! the Lord give you the true discerning of this spirit, and of his own Spirit; and deliver you out of the snare of the enemy, and open that eye in you, to which he gives the sight of what is, and who are, of him, and what is, and who are, not of him: that ye may be disjoined from all that is not of God, and joined to the Lord, abiding and walking in him; and may know, that God doth not cast off his holy people, gatherings, and assemblies, but constantly appears in the midst of such as truly and humbly wait for him; glory be to his name!

God knoweth in what sense, in what understanding, in what love, in what desire, in what fear, in what knowledge, from him, I write this to you; who am a true friend to you both (in true and faithful love, as in God's sight), and a hearty desirer of your everlasting happiness.

I. P.

19th of the Twelfth Month, 1672.

To Colonel Kenrick.

The gospel dispensation consists in Spirit and power. The kingdom which Christ and his apostles preached—which the true believers were to receive, and to wait for an entrance to be ministered to them into—stood not in word, but in power. Now there are four sorts of professors of the

Christian religion in this our day, one sort whereof only, are acquainted with the gospel dispensation.

First, There is one sort, which have been nurtured in a profession of Christianity by education, and have improved it by study, but have never known the power, virtue, and inward life thereof; but as men, with the man's part, wisdom, understanding, and seriousness of mind, have considered of the truth and weight of things contained in the Scriptures, and so have received somewhat of the holy doctrine into their natural understanding, and given themselves up to the observation and practice thereof, according as they have apprehended and understood things. These have become more serious and excellent men than others, but fall very far short of the nature and state of Christianity; yea, the strictest among these, many times, become the greatest opposers and persecutors of true Christianity.

Secondly, There are some who have had a taste of the true power, and have had living desires and breathings after it, and a sense of the preciousness and excellency of it; who have also felt the quickening Spirit, and begun therein; and yet have afterwards lost that sense, and centred in a literal knowledge and wisdom about those very things, which they had once some living experience of. These are like salt which hath lost its savor; and it is hard for them ever to be seasoned again; and from among these do rise the greatest persecutors and bitterest persecution against the life, truth, and power.

Thirdly, There are some, who, though they never came to the distinct knowledge of the power, yet have had a great sense of their want of it, and have abode in that sense; and in all the ways and forms of religion they have been or are in, still seek after it; and reckon no form any thing, but as the power in some measure appears in it; and the cry of their souls is daily after it, and their waiting is for it. These, wherever they are, are of the true seed; these are the birth of the heavenly Spirit and wisdom; these are sheep of the true Shepherd's fold, though not yet gathered home to the fold to which they properly belong. These

are the broken, the bruised, the sick, the wounded, the captives, the distressed, the poor, the naked, &c., to whom the gospel of peace, the gathering, the salvation, and redemption belongs. And the bleating of these is known; yea, their longing and cry after the redeeming and gathering power of the Shepherd is felt, however they may be, at present, prejudiced against that very dispensation of truth, life, and power, whereby the Shepherd gathers.

Fourthly, There are some whom God hath brought to the distinct sense and knowledge of the power. There are some whose minds God hath turned to the inward light and power. There are some whom the Shepherd hath gathered home to the Father's house, where is bread enough, and to the true fold, where is rest and peace enough—some who have seen an end of all perfection, in the legal comprehendings and creaturely strivings after life, righteousness, and holiness, and are come to the commandment which is exceeding broad, and wherein is life everlasting. Now these experience somewhat of the gospel dispensation, and know the difference between being under the law and under grace; and can tell what the kingdom is which Christ preached and bade men seek, and what the gospel is which the poor in spirit receive; and what the healing is which drops from under the wing of the Saviour and Redeemer. And they can tell what justification is, and what sanctification, regeneration, and redemption is; and can distinguish between truth as testified in the letter, and as it is in Jesus; between the law of the letter, and the law of the Spirit, which is written in the new heart and mind, by the finger of God's pure and living power. Now the knowledge of these, the faith of these, the peace, the joy, the justification, and sanctification, and redemption of these, differs greatly from all the former; from the two first sorts in nature and kind, from the latter in degree, clearness, and purity. For though all the sheep of the true Shepherd have somewhat of the true knowledge, somewhat of the true faith, somewhat of the true justification, somewhat of the true sanctification, and may at times have some taste of true peace

and joy, and have true breathings and supplications in their spirits towards their Father that begat them; yet, they are not clear, they are not pure, they are not unmixed; there is a great deal which is not true, which passeth for true with them; because they are not come to the anointing, to the eye-salve which opens the eye, nor to the Spirit of judgment and burning, which separates inwardly in the heart, understanding, mind, and judgment, between the precious and the vile. So that when they speak of the heavenly things, they do but stutter and stammer; and though truth can sometimes own their sense, yet, many times, not their words; there is such a mixture of the dark, earthly comprehension in them, which they are not delivered and redeemed from. But it is otherwise with those who are turned to the light and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have known it, and been exercised, fanned, and purged by it; for in them, the blind eye is opened, the deaf ear unstopped; and to them, the pure understanding and language is given, whereby they know and understand, not only words concerning Him, but Him *himself* who is true, and are in him that is true, even in Him who is *the very God and life eternal.*

Yet there are different states among those who are thus effectually called and gathered home, according to their growth in the truth, and faithfulness to it. For if there be not a great care and watchfulness, there may be a neglecting to hear the voice of the Shepherd, and to walk with him; and then, such miss of the pastures of life, and of the pure rest, joy, and peace, which he administers to others; and of the garment or covering of the Spirit, which they who live and walk in the Spirit (in every thing giving up to the Spirit, and denying all the lusts and fruits of the flesh), daily find themselves covered with. Nor doth God so "dwell in them and walk in them," as he doth in those that remain separate from all evil (from which the Spirit of judgment and burning purifies and separates), and touch no unclean thing. Yea, they who grieve Christ's Spirit, and do not heed his call and knocks, he doth not so sup with them, nor they with him; nor do such partake so of the

river of life and wine of the kingdom, as those whose ear is open to him, and who are always ready to obey and follow him "whithersoever he goeth."

I. P.

19th of Fourth Month, 1673.

To Widow Hemmings.

Dear Friend,

I think it long since I heard from thee. I remember the sweet and precious savor that was upon thy spirit, the last time I was with thee, with my dear friend, J. C. It hath been my hope and desire, that the Lord might preserve thee therein.

The truth in the inward parts is of God; that is the thing which all are to mind; and in which, acceptance with God is witnessed. Out of the truth in the inward parts, there is no acceptance with God, let men profess what they will or can. In the truth, there is always acceptance; for God never disowned it, nor any that are in it. Here, the flesh and blood which give life are fed on; here, the bread which comes down from heaven and the water of life are known: but out of this, they are not, nor can they be, known.

Oh, my friend, that thou mightest feel more and more the truth in the inward parts, and be more and more established therein! What is the feeding outward, or supper outward? It is but a shadow. The feeding inward, or the supper inward, is the substance. And as the day dawns, and the day-star arises in thy heart, the shadows will flee away, and the substance be discovered, owned, and delighted in by thee. The shadows reach but to the outward part, but the ministration of life, the ministration of the substance, reaches to the seed: and thou must be more and more transplanted into the seed, that Christ may be formed in thee, and thou formed in him; and so grow up into his heavenly nature and image,—out of the earthly, out of the natural. Oh! the Lord God prosper his own seed and holy plantation in thy heart; and keep thee in the meek, lowly,

humble, poor, and tender spirit, unto which is his mercy and blessing.

I expected to have heard from thee, or at least from thy daughter S., before this time, supposing I had a promise thereof from her. The Lord uphold, preserve, and bless her. Let her not look out, but only look within, what the will of the Lord is; and mind nothing else; and it will be well with her.

My dear love is both to thee and her, who am thy sincere friend,

I. P.

4th of Ninth Month, 1678.

To ——— ———

Dear Friend,—

For in those true desires, which I observe in thy heart towards the Lord, thou art, and canst not but be, dear unto me—I had a desire to have stayed a little while with thee, the last time I passed through Uxbridge, but was prevented.

The occasion of my writing to thee was somewhat which was on my heart toward thee.

Wouldst thou know the Lord in the gospel covenant, and wouldst thou walk with him therein? I know thou wouldst. Wouldst thou have sin destroyed in thee, and Christ reign in thy heart? Wouldst thou so fight against thy enemies, as to overcome, and so run the race, as certainly to obtain the everlasting prize, and eternal weight of glory? Oh! then, mind truth in the inward parts, even the grace and truth which are by Jesus Christ; to whom God hath given power, and who gives power to his, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, over sin and corruption in the inward parts. Did not God conquer the enemies of the outward Jews in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the good land also? And shall he not do so inwardly, for the inward Jews? There are enemies in Egypt; in the land that is, as I may say, wholly dark, and under the oppression of spiritual Pharaoh. There are enemies in that heart, which is as a wilderness and solitary

place; and there are enemies in that heart, which is in some measure renewed, and made good and honest. Now all the spiritual enemies, all the enemies of a man's own house, are to be destroyed by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, working by his grace in the heart; which being received, subjected to, dwelt in, and obeyed, brings deliverance and salvation from them all. And when salvation is brought home to the heart, and wrought out there by the Lord, it is to be enjoyed and abode in, and the soul is not to return back again into captivity; but being delivered out of the hands of its inward and spiritual enemies, by the holy, inward, and spiritual covenant, is to serve God in the dominion of his Son's life, in holiness and righteousness all its days here upon the earth.

O my friend! mind this precious truth inwardly, this precious grace inwardly, the precious life inwardly, the precious light inwardly, the precious power inwardly, the inward word of life, the inward voice of the Shepherd in the heart, the inward seed, the inward salt, the inward leaven, the inward pearl, &c., whereby Christ effects this. Distinguish between words *without* concerning the thing, and the thing itself *within;* and wait and labor, then to know, understand, and be guided by, the motives, leadings, drawings, teachings, quickenings, &c., of the thing itself within. And take heed of being offended, because of any thing, either within or without; for offences will come, but blessed was he, that was not offended at Christ outwardly in the days of his flesh; and blessed is he, that is not offended at his inward truth, and inward way of appearance in the day of his Spirit. Moses, that precious servant of the Lord, spake unadvisedly with his lips; how easy is it then, for those who come not near Moses' state so to do; but wait on God, that thou mayst distinguish between what truth speaks in any of us; and what any of us may unadvisedly speak, out of the truth,—if we stand not upon the watch, and our words be not seasoned with God's light and his grace. For praying to God, as God's Spirit leads and gives ability, and watching unto prayer, and seeking opportunities both alone

and in our families, that God may open our hearts, and breathe upon us, and for frequent and diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures,—none can testify from the truth against these things; though against men's dead and formal performing of these things, there is a living testimony. Now take heed of mistaking the testimony in any; or of being stumbled, if any go beyond their due bounds in their testimony.

O my friend, how precious is the thing, beyond all words or testimonies! Oh that thou mayst come to know *that* in thyself, and to be sensible of God's ministering by it to thee, and increasing it in thee! that thou mayst experimentally feel the seed in thee, and find it grow more and more, till it come to be a tree; and then sit under its shadow, and be delighted with its defence, and partake of its sap and fruit. Oh that every day thou mightest have a sense of the life itself, the truth itself, the power itself, the wisdom itself, the righteousness itself! and that thou mightest find the Lord Jesus Christ both unclothing and clothing thee inwardly, sensibly, and experimentally;—that thou mightest find him taking away thy sin, thy iniquities, thy unrighteousness, both within and without also, and filling thee, and clothing thee with his righteousness;—that so, in God's sight, and by his putting on thee, and forming in thee, thou mightst find thy heart filled and covered with the nature, image and Spirit of his dear Son;—that thou mightest indeed, put off the old man with his nature and deeds, and put on the new man, and know the renewing and new-creating in Christ Jesus, in the spirit of thy mind;—and so have a certain understanding of the truth, as it is in Jesus, and as he manifests it, gives power to it, and causes it to work in thy heart. This is the desire of my soul for thee: the Lord guide thee to it, and remove all lets and hindrances out of thy way.

My dear and true love is to thy husband. The Lord manifest his pure and living truth in both your hearts, and gather both your minds thereunto, and make you one therein.

Thy friend in truth, who heartily wisheth well to thy soul.

I. P.

Grove Place, 17th of Ninth Month, 1678.

To Elizabeth Stonar.

Dear Friend,

Whose life in the Lord, and prosperity in the truth, my heart greatly desireth; even that thou mayst come to the perfect service, and free and full enjoyment of thy soul's Beloved; in which, if I could be in any way helpful to thee, my heart would greatly rejoice and bless the Lord. This morning, when I awoke, my heart was exercised before the Lord concerning thee; and several things did spring up in my mind relating to thee, which I may now signify to thee, as the Lord shall please to bring them again to my mind, and open them in my heart in reference to thee. I would fain have thee rightly understand, and be found doing, what the Lord requires of thee; that it may go well with thee, and that thy heart may be satisfied, and thy soul blessed, in believing and obeying the truth as it is in Jesus.

The first thing that rose up in my heart concerning thee this morning was, about confessing Christ before men. It is a great duty, and I would not have thee mistake about it, or fail in it; but diligently wait on God to know what it is, and faithfully to practise it in thy state and place; which if thou do, thou wilt find life and blessedness flowing with it upon thy soul.

After this, several scriptures, sweet and precious to my taste, sprang up in my heart to lay before thy view; that thou also mightest suck sweetness, and reap benefit through the living sense of them, and the bowing of thy spirit to what the Lord shall please to make manifest to thee thereby.

The first scripture that sprang up in me to thee, was that of Rom. xii. 2. not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of thy mind, that thou mayst prove that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God. Thou must stand at a distance from the spirit of this world, thou must not touch the unclean thing, but be a chaste virgin in heart, in word, in conversation, if thou expect to be married to the Lamb, to become one spirit with him, to

know his mind, and to enjoy the love and be the delight of his Father.

The next scripture in my heart was, Rev. ii. 10. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Upon which scripture this question rose in my heart to thee, Dost not thou fear the sufferings which may attend thee, in thy state and place, for truth's sake? Dost not thou look out at them? If thou do, it will weaken thy faith, and be a snare to thee; and such a beam in thy eye, that thou wilt never be able to see that particular way and path of truth, which is most proper for thy soul, till this beam be plucked out and separated from thee.

Unto this was soon added that of Isaiah li. 12, 13. "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" Oh, take heed of distrusting the Comforter, *thy* Comforter! who is able and ready to help and comfort the souls of his, in the sorest distresses and oppressions that can befall them, either within or without. And consider this also, that forgetting the Lord is the necessary consequence of fearing man. It cannot be, but that he that feareth man should in some measure or degree forget the Lord,—his love, his wisdom, his power, his goodness, his faithfulness to, and tender care over his children in their following him,—especially in the midst of the cruel hardships and sufferings which often befall them therein.

The next was Samson's riddle: Judges xiv. 14. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." It is everlastingly true, both inwardly and outwardly, to the children of the Most High, who live in his Spirit, and walk in his Spirit, and are guided by the power and virtue of his life. Every thing that would devour and destroy them the Lord destroyeth, by the power and virtue

of his life and Spirit springing up in them; and out of that which is strong against them, which roars against them in the strength and power of darkness, the Lord brings forth sweetness in and to their spirits.

Then that of Luke ix. 23, 24. came before me (which is said to all that hear Christ's voice and blessed counsel): "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Now, I beseech thee, consider; dost thou take up the daily cross, and bear it faithfully for Christ's sake? Dost thou stand a faithful witness against the spirit of darkness, and works of darkness, where thou livest? Dost thou not comply with any worship there which thy heart knoweth to be out of the truth and Spirit of life, wherein all true, holy, living, spiritual worship can alone be performed? Oh! take heed of shunning the cross in any respect; for then thou givest way to unbelief, and to that wisdom, thoughts, reasonings, and judgment which are not of the truth, but of the flesh: shunning that which God hath appointed to crucify sin in the heart, and under which the seed is to spring up and live, which is the power of God unto salvation, to all that abide under it, and daily bear it.

The last scripture, which at this time sprang up in me to thee, was that very sweet one in Solomon's Song of Songs: chap. i. ver. 7, 8. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." If thou wouldst come to the feeding-place of the flock, and to rest in the pure life, power, and righteousness of the Lord with them; thou must mind their footsteps, thou must go forth out of that which God hath gathered and led them forth out of, thou must forsake whatever is not of the Father, but of this world (and in forsaking it, stand a witness against the world), as God hath taught them to forsake it.

Thou must wait for the same Spirit, for the same cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of the same flaming fire by night, to lead thee and preserve thee, which hath led and preserved them. See Isa. iv. 5. And this will lead thee out of the same Egypt and Sodom, and all the remainders of Babylon, wherein as yet thou mayst be held captive; and this alone must break the oppressing spirit and power which stands in thy way, through thy faithful sufferings under it. And through the same wilderness and righteous judgments of the Lord, thou must pass, that they have passed. For Zion and her converts must be redeemed with judgment and righteousness, and with the Spirit of burning, and the pain of the cross; nor dost thou know, how thou standest in the way of thy own soul's good, while thou in any measure avoidest or escapest it. And if thou be one of the called, chosen, and faithful, following fully after the Lord, in the same Spirit, and power, and banner of the cross, under which his called, chosen, and faithful ones have followed him; he will lead thee into the same land of life, rest, and peace, and holy dominion over sin and Satan, into which he hath led those, who have faithfully followed the Lamb, whithersoever he hath pleased to go before, and lead them. So thou must wait to have thy heart daily more and more opened, and guided purely and livingly and sensibly by the Lord, into what he hath led his children, servants, family, and redeemed heritage. For of a truth, the Lord hath raised the seed of life in his people; and what his seed denies, what the life of the Son denies, what truth in the heart denies, all that are of the truth and in the truth, will be taught by it, and learn of it, to deny also.

Thus, my dear friend, in the most dear, tender, and true love, have I opened my heart to thee, as things sprang in me for thy sake: and the desire of my soul to the Lord is, that they may be serviceable to thee, and that thou mayest be led by the holy, leading Spirit more and more into truth, and live in truth, and feel the life of truth living and reigning in thee; being delivered from the enemy's temptations, and the subtle twinings of the serpent, which thy condition

will often meet with: the Lord discover them to thee, and preserve thee from being ensnared with them.

Thy constant friend in the dear love and service of the truth.

I. P.

Amersham, Bury End,
20th of First Month, 1675.

To Widow Hemmings.

My Dear Friend,

I have not forgotten thee; but have often inquired after thee, and many times breathed for thee.

O my friend! look not *out* at what stands in the way; what if it look dreadfully as a lion, is not the Lord stronger than the mountains of prey? but look *in*, where the law of life is written, and the will of the Lord revealed, that thou mayst know what is the Lord's will concerning thee; and then show thyself a faithful daughter of Abraham, and be like Sarah, not terrified with any amazement. So soon as I had read thy letter, this arose in my heart to thee as God's counsel, proper to thy state. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Be not straitened in thy spirit, as fearing what thou shalt suffer for Christ's sake; or as if God would not stand by thee, or carry thee through. Be thy sufferings as great as possible, yet he is faithful, who hath promised thee an hundred fold in this life.

Oh! what can hurt thee, if thy God stand by thee? Be faithful to his testimony in thy place, and he will stand by thee. Take heed of joining with dead worships, which the seed of God in thee disowns, and cannot relish; but meekly and in fear, testify against and abstain from what thou feelest not to be of the Lord.

This was what was in my heart to thee at present, in true and tender love, and in melting desires for thee, that the Lord may guide and preserve thee, and give thee of the Lamb's courage and strength, who by meekness and suffer-

ings is now to conquer. What if the wicked nature, which is as a sea casting out mire and dirt, rage against thee! There is a river, a sweet, still, flowing river, the streams whereof will make glad thy heart. And learn but in quietness and stillness to retire to the Lord, and wait upon him; in whom thou shalt feel peace and joy, in the midst of thy trouble from the cruel and vexatious spirit of this world. So wait to know thy work and service to the Lord every day, in thy place and station; and the Lord make thee faithful therein, and thou wilt want neither help, support, nor comfort.

Thy friend, in the truest, sincerest, and most constant love.

I. P.

London, 1st of Ninth Month, 1675.

To Catharine Pordage.

Ah! my poor, distressed, entangled Friend,

While thou seekest to avoid the snare, thou deeply runnest into it: for thou art feeding on the tree of knowledge, in giving way to these thoughts, reasonings and suggestions, which keep thee from obedience to that which hath been made manifest to thy understanding. And thou mayst well be feeble in thy mind, while thou art thus separated from Him who is thy strength, and lettest in his enemy. This is not the right feebleness of mind which God pities, nor the right way of waiting to receive strength. Why shouldst not thou act, so far as God gives thee light? and why shouldst thou not appear willing to obey him, even in little things, so far as he hath given thee light? What if I should say, that all this is but the subtlety of the serpent's wisdom to avoid the cross, and is not that simplicity and plainness of heart towards God, which thou takest it to be; and that thou art loath to be so poor, and low, and mean in the eyes of others, as this practice would make thee appear?

Thy friend in the truth, and in sincere love,

I. P.

Amersham, 25th of Ninth Month, 1675.

To my dear suffering Friends in Scotland.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

Who have partaken of the tender mercy and blessed visitation of the Lord.

Oh, blessed be the Lord, who pitied and helped us in our low estate, and whose tender love and mercy hath followed us, from his first visiting us, to this present day! And indeed, the Lord is with us, (what can we desire more?) preparing us for himself, preserving us in the life of his blessed truth, building us up more and more, and causing his Spirit of glory and living power to rest upon us, and the virtue thereof to spring up in us day by day.

Oh, the beauty and glory of the day of our God increaseth upon his heritage, blessed be the name of the Lord! And to what tend all the workings of the contrary spirit and power, but to eat out its own interest and kingdom, through the Lord's blessed ordering of things; so that all things work together for good, and for the advancing of truth, and the growth of it in the hearts of God's heritage.

So, my dear friends, none look out, either at outward or inward sufferings; but to the Lord only, whose life, Spirit, and power is above them, and bears up all over them, who are in spirit joined to him, faithfully waiting upon him; which God daily teaches and enables his to do. Thus, my dear friends, feel the Lord's presence and power among you, who is always near his, but especially in the time of their straits, trials, and sufferings: and wait to feel the life springing, and doing its proper work in each of you day by day; working out what is to be wrought out in any, and working more and more into the glory of the heavenly image; that through the sufferings, ye may come into the glory, and be crowned with the glory, virtue, holiness, righteousness, and dominion of life over all; and thus the Son may sit upon his throne in you, and wield his holy and righteous sceptre, and give you dominion in and with him, over all that would veil life, or keep it under, in any of you.

So, my dear friends, be strong in the Lord, with the strength of the Lord, with which he is clothing those whom he hath emptied and made weak; for the trials, temptations, and afflictions prepare for, and (as I may say) lead into the possession of, the desired inheritance; where all that the soul hath breathed and waited for is bestowed upon it, by the bountiful hand of the Father of mercies, who keeps covenant and mercy for ever, and renews covenant and mercy day by day.

So the tender God of my life, and Father of the blessings and mercies of my once greatly distressed and miserable soul, instruct you, preserve you, watch over you; exercise your spirits most advantageously, daily open you to himself; keep you empty and naked before him of all your own clothing and righteousness, and fill you with that which flows from the pure, living fountain; to the unspeakable joy of your hearts, and the glory of his own name over all for ever.

Be of good faith, my dear friends, look not out at any thing; fear none of those things ye may be exposed to suffer, either outwardly or inwardly; but trust the Lord over all, and your life will spring, and grow, and refresh you, and the love and power will purge out, and keep out, what would hinder its growth; and ye will learn obedience and faithfulness more and more, even by your exercises and sufferings; yea, the Lord will teach you the very mystery of faith and obedience; (oh blessed lesson!) and ye shall not be disappointed of your hope or crown, by any thing the enemy can plot or bring about against you, but have the weight of glory increased and enlarged by his temptations and your many sufferings; the wisdom, power, love, and goodness of the Lord, ordering *every* thing for you, and ordering *your* hearts in every thing,—you having given up to him, and keeping them continually given up to him, in the holy seed of truth, in which he hath in some measure already joined, and is daily more and more joining, you to himself.

This is the salutation and tender visit of the love of your brother in the truth; whose breathings are to God for you,

and his praises unto him, through the sense of his being with you, and daily showing mercy to you, upholding and preserving you in the midst of your sore trials and afflictions.

I. P.

London, 5th of Fifth Month, 1676.

To his Brother Arthur.

Dear Brother,

I have been a traveller after the Lord from my childhood, and great misery have I undergone for want of him. That which I wanted was his Spirit, life, virtue, and redeeming power to be revealed in my own heart. Oh, blessed be the Lord! beyond my expectation, he hath directed me where to wait for this within, and hath revealed it in me; and now I can say in truth of heart, and in the sense of that birth which God hath begotten in me, "Lo! this is my God whom I so wanted and waited for;" and I find him stronger in my heart than the strong man, which possessed it before he cast him out from thence, and made a spoil of his goods. And now, dear brother, how can I hold my peace, and not testify of the love, mercy, and good-will of the Lord towards me, and invite others to the redeeming power, of which the Lord in his goodness hath made me a partaker? And now, brother, a few words respecting thy return to what I sent thee; not for contention's sake (the Lord knows my dwelling is in that life and peace which shuts them out), but in the tender love and care of my heart concerning the eternal welfare of thy soul, which I would not, by any means or device of the enemy, have eternally deceived.

All sides may agree in notions about the regenerating power; but all do not *receive* the regenerating power, nor are truly regenerating in the sight of God; nor come to witness the head of the serpent inwardly crushed, and his works destroyed, and kingdom laid waste inwardly by this power; which must needs be, before a man be translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the

dear Son. There is a kingdom of darkness inwardly, which the unbelieving and disobedient to God's Spirit and power dwell in; and there is a kingdom of light inwardly, wherein the children of light dwell with God, and walk in the light as he is in the light.

But that the work of regeneration is only begun in this life, and not finished till the other life, *that* is a great mistake. For the Scriptures testify, that salvation is to be wrought out *here*, and not hereafter. Christ had all power in heaven and earth, and he sent forth his Spirit and power to work out the work *here;* and his sanctifying Spirit and power is able to sanctify throughout, in soul, body, and spirit; and the gifts of the ministry are for perfecting the saints, till they all come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, that they may be presented to God perfect in Christ Jesus. The holy leaven is put into the lump *here*, and it is able to leaven the lump *here;* and holiness is not only to be begun, but *perfected in the fear of God*, as the apostle exhorts, who did not exhort to a needless or impossible thing; and the whole armor of God is able to defend the whole man from all the assaults of the wicked one; for greater is He, in the saints, that preserves from sin, than he that tempts to sin. Oh, how precious is it to war with the enemy in this conquering faith, and to resist him therein! that he may still flee away, for fear of God's power and sword, which will pierce him and can easily overcome him.

There is a state where the spirit is willing, but the flesh weak: yet it is not so where the spirit is become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. There is a holy hill of God, a spiritual Zion, a mountain whereupon his house is built, which the wing of the Almighty overshadows; and his sheep that are gathered by the great Shepherd and Bishop of the soul feed there, and none can make afraid. The flesh *will* be rebelling against the Spirit, until it be destroyed by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But when a man is really crucified with Christ, and dead to sin, sin hath no more power over him; for Christ lives in him and reigns in his heart over sin and the temptations thereof.

When the God of peace treads Satan under the feet of the soul that was once captived by him, there it is known whose the kingdom and the power and the victory and the dominion is.

And this is true blessedness begun, carried on, and upheld by the pure, sanctifying power of the word of life in the heart; and the birth which is born of God, knows it to be no delusion, but the truth as it is in Jesus. And such are obedient to the holy church of God, and to the holy ministry, which he hath brought out of the wilderness; and know of what nature the churches and ministry have been, which have appeared and been set up in the world, since the true church fled into and was hid in the wilderness, and was fed there by the Lord God of life. The devil hath long transformed himself into the likeness of an angel of light, and cheated and beguiled souls; while the false church hath reigned, antichrist sitting in the temple, the man-child having been caught up to God, and the true church in the wilderness; and men have generally put darkness for light, and light for darkness. But blessed be the Lord! the true light, which shone in the apostles' days, now shines again; and discovers the mystery of iniquity, and the golden cup of abominations, wherewith the earth hath been made drunk; and Satan falls down like lightning before the power of Him, on whom the true church leaned, when she came out of the wilderness, and still leans, and will lean upon for ever; and the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against her.

And blessed be the Lord! who hath brought many wanderers and distressed ones to the sight of the true church, and to delightful obedience to her, whose voice is not different to Christ's, but one with it; and such are in fellowship with the Father and Son, and with the saints who dwell in the light. These are clothed with the Lamb's innocency and righteousness, and do not dwell in darkness nor in sin; having crucified the old man with his affections and lusts, and put off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, and put on the new man which is created in

Christ Jesus, in the righteousness and holiness of truth. They that are here dwell not in fancies, nor feed on fancies, but on eternal life, in the pure pastures of life, where the Shepherd of the inward and spiritual Israel feeds his holy flock day by day.

As for the Romish church, or any other church built up in the apostasy from the spirit and life of the apostles, the Lord hath given me to see through them, to that which was before them, and will be after them. And O dear brother! if thou couldst but rightly wait for and meet with the holy, regenerating, purifying power, which in tender love I testified to thee of; it would lead thee to that which is the true church indeed, which hath been persecuted by the dragon and false church, and the blood of her seed made drunk by the bloody, dragonish church, for many ages.

The Lord hath made me thy brother in the line of nature; oh that thou wert my brother in that truth, which lives and abides for ever! Oh that thou knew the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is the mother of all who are born of the regenerating virtue and power!

I. P.

20th of Seventh Month, 1676.

To Sir William Armorer (so styled.)

Friend,

The weighty sense of an eternal condition after this life, hath been upon my heart from my childhood; and it is often with me, that I must give an account to God, when I pass out of this transitory world, of all things done in the body; and shall enter into eternal rest and blessedness, or eternal woe or misery.

This causeth me to call upon the Lord daily, for grace and wisdom from him; that my conscience, being cleansed through the blood of his Son, may be kept void of offence, both towards him and men. And truly (I speak not boastingly, but in the fear of the Lord, and in the sense of his

goodness and tender mercy to me), my heart is preserved in love and innocency towards those, who most injuriously, and without provocation on my part, have taken away my liberty, for aught I know, for my whole lifetime. What thou further intendest towards me, the Lord knows, to whom I have committed my cause: but this is on my heart to express to thee, because, when I was with thee, thou spakest words to this purpose, that *we wished thee hanged, or would be glad if thou wert hanged.* God, who knows my heart, is witness, that I wish thee no evil, neither to thee nor thy family; but wish thou mayst avoid all such things, as may bring his wrath and curse upon thee, either in this world or the world to come.

And, friend, do not provoke the Lord by afflicting those that fear him; but cease to do evil, learn to do well; and this will please the Lord, and is more acceptable to him than all the worship that can be offered up to him without this.

I have sent thee a little book, as a token of my love, desiring thee to peruse it seriously. Oh! do not endeavor to bring me into such a condition as is there related. I have had greater light, in the way into which the Lord hath led me, than this man had; and in that light I have seen, that I ought not to swear, but to give the "Yea" and "Nay" of truth, which comes from the Christian nature, and is of far more certainty and assurance than swearing. For the man that swears may easily break his oath, but he that keeps to the truth cannot alter his yea and nay, but it stands in the truth; and this our Lord and Master hath set above, and on the top of, and instead of, swearing; which if we should vary from and deny, we should deny him who hath taught us not to swear. Indeed, if we had not learnt it of the Lord, and if it was not by him required of us, we should rather swear than otherwise; for we would very willingly give men satisfaction, in those particulars which they require us to swear about.

Friend, God hath given thee an immortal soul, and doth require of thee righteousness towards thy fellow-creatures,

and temperance and moderation of spirit, and sensibleness of the judgment to come after this life. Thou are stricken in years, and thou hast but a little moment left remaining of thy time; and then it will be determined concerning thy soul, what or how it shall be for ever! Let the words of love, truth, and innocency from me, prevail upon thee to be serious, and to let in the sense and fear of God upon thy heart. Thou hast spent much time in serving man; Oh, spend a little in serving and fearing God! There is somewhat, which is pure, of God, appointed by him to exercise the conscience towards him. Thou hast such a thing near thee. Oh that thou mightest know it, and be joined to it! for till then, thou canst never truly serve nor fear the Lord, but mayst spend thy time here in a vain show, and at last be judged and condemned by the Lord, and lie down in eternal sorrow; which, it is the desire of my heart, may not be thy portion from the hand of the Lord.

This is from a sufferer by thee, who never gave thee the least cause or provocation so to deal with me.

I. P.

To the Lady Conway.

Dear Friend,

I have heard both of thy love to truth, and of thy great afflictions outwardly; both which occasion a sense concerning thee, and breathings to the tender Father of my life for thee; that thy heart may know and be joined to the truth, and thou mayst live and walk in it, reaping the sweet comfort, support and satisfaction, which God daily ministers in and through it, to his gathered and preserved ones. I am satisfied thou hast need of comforts and support; oh that thou mayst be led thither, and be daily found by the Lord there, where the Comforter doth daily delight to supply the afflicted and suffering ones, whether inwardly or outwardly, with comfort.

And, my dear friend, take heed of that wisdom and knowl-

edge which is not of the seed, and which can be held in the mind, without the springing life of the seed. The first day I was convinced, I was not only convinced in my understanding concerning the seed, but I felt the seed in my heart, and my heart was enraptured with the sense and feeling of it; and my great cry to the Lord was, that I might faithfully travel through all the sufferings and death of the other part, into union with and enjoyment of it; and that that wisdom, which was not of the pure living root and nature, might die in me. Now, how I have been exercised and taught since is hard for me to utter. What poverty, what weakness, what foolishness I have been led into! how I have learned, in a sense, out of the reach of the comprehending, knowing mind; how tender I have been of every secret shining of light in my heart; how the Lord hath taught and enabled me to pluck out my right eye, and cut off my right hand, and cast them from me, that I might not see with that eye, nor work with that hand, but be greatly maimed in the sight of men, and in my own sight too.

O friend! wait daily to feel the seed, to feel the seed live in thee, and the most pleasing part of thy nature die, as it can live out of the seed. Oh that thou couldst change all old knowledge, for that which is new and living! The seed is the well: receive the seed, then thou receivest the well: let it spring, wait for its springing, wait to know its springing: bear all the trials and judgments, which the Father of life sees necessary to prepare the heart for its springing. Oh, feel that which limits and subdues thoughts, and brings them into captivity and subjection! Be not exercised in things too high for thee—David, the man after God's own heart, who was wiser than his teachers, was not;—but come out of knowledge into feeling, and there thou wilt find the true knowledge given,—arising, springing, and covering thy heart, as the waters cover the sea. And still wait to be taught of God, to distinguish between the outwardness of knowledge—the notional part of the thing known, as it can be comprehended in the mind,—and the life of it, as it is felt and abides in the heart.

The Lord God of my life be thy Teacher; point thy mind to the pure seed of the kingdom, and open it in thee; make thee so little, that thou mayst enter into it, and keep thee so low and poor, that thou mayst abide in it; managing these troublesome times in the outward, for thy advantage in the inward; that the city and temple of the living God may be built in it, and thou mayst know him daily dwelling and walking therein. Thus mayst thou be married to the Lord, and become one spirit with him; finding that daily removing from thee, [which is to be removed, even] by the mighty arm and pure operation of his Spirit, till all that is contrary be done away; then may thy soul dwell with its Beloved in fulness of joy, life, and peace for evermore.

This is from the tender love, and fresh breathings of life, in thy soul's true Friend, and most hearty well-wisher,

I. P.

17th of Third Month, 1677.

To James Eeles.

Friend,

God is my witness, to whom I must give an account of all my actions, that it is my desire to be found in all true love, courtesy, and righteousness, in my dealings towards all men; and that I would by no means deny any man his just due, which he can by any just law or right claim from me.

Now, as touching tithes, the payment or refusing of them is to me a matter of conscience, weighty on my heart before the Lord; and I would do therein as he might justify, and not condemn me. I know tithes were ordained by God, to be paid to the Levitical priesthood, under the law; but the same power that ordained them under the law, disannulled them under the gospel. Heb. vii. 12 and 18. Here is God's power and authority for disannulling them. Now, that any man or men have true right, power, and authority to set up or require to be paid, under the gospel, what God's power

hath disannulled,—indeed, I do not see; nor can I be subject to any human authority or law in this thing, without sinning against God, and incurring his wrath upon my soul, which I have formerly found very dreadful, and would not, for fear of sufferings in this world, expose myself to the bearing of. Besides, Christ saith, "He that denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father." He is the substance of all the figures under the law; he hath put an end to them; he is King, Priest, and Prophet in the church of God; all power in heaven and earth is given to him, and he sent forth his ministers without tithes. Now, tithes were set up in the dark time of popery, and not by the gospel light; and they who know the gospel light dare not be subject to that which was set up in matters of religion, by the dark power of Rome, in the time of darkness.

I was willing to give thee this plain and naked account, that thou mayst see how weighty the thing is with me, and how dangerous it would be to me, to do what thou requirest of me; for in so doing, I should lose my peace with God, I should be unfaithful to the testimony he hath given me to bear, I should dishonor his name and truth, and bring his sore wrath and displeasure upon my soul and conscience. Judge, thyself, in this matter, whether I had not better expose myself to any outward sufferings, though ever so great (either from thee or any thou shalt make use of), than expose my soul to so great inward misery and sufferings, for disobedience to the Lord in this particular. Consider Ralph Trumper,* a just tender, honest-hearted man,—how much he hath suffered in this respect, to keep his conscience clear in this thing; who, I believe, would rather suffer all his former losses ten times over again, than suffer what he did (to my knowledge), for paying tithes, after he was convinced of the evil and unlawfulness of it. I do not contend with thee by the law of the land; but I must be subject to the law of God, who shows me from what root tithes came; and that they are not the maintenance of the ministry of Christ, or allowed by Christ, but the maintenance of the ministry

* See Besse's Sufferings of Friends, Vol. 1st, p 78, 79.

Rome's power set up; both which ministry and its maintenance are to be denied and witnessed against, by those whom he calls forth to testify to his truth in these things.

So, at present, I say no more, but remain thy friend, ready to do thee any good, though I should suffer ever so deeply from thee.

L. P.

25th of Fourth Month, 1677.

To Dulcibella Laiton.

Dear Friend,

Concerning whom I feel a travail, this is the sense of my heart in relation to thee.

There is a pure seed of life which God hath sown in thee; oh that it might come through, and come over all that is above it, and contrary to it! And for that end wait daily to feel it, and to feel thy mind subdued by it, and joined to it. Take heed of looking out, in the reasonings of thy mind, but dwell in the feeling sense of life; and then that will arise in thee more and more, which maketh truly wise, and gives power, and brings into the holy authority and dominion of life. Many that have been long travelling, are now entering into their possessions and inheritance, which the Lord is daily enlarging in them, and to them. Oh that thy lot may be among them, inwardly witnessed and possessed by thee! Prize inward exercises, griefs, and troubles, and let faith and patience have their perfect work in them. Oh, desire to be good, upright, and perfect in God's sight! and wait to feel the life, Spirit and power which makes so. Come out of the knowledge and comprehension about things, into the feeling life; and let *that* be thy knowledge and wisdom, which thou receivest and retainest in the feeling life; and that will lead thee into the footsteps of the flock, without reasoning, consulting, or disputing.

Oh! wait to be taught and enabled by God to fetch right steps in thy travels, and to take up the cross and despise the shame in every thing, wherein that wisdom, will, and

mind, which is to be crucified, would be judge; for it will judge amiss and lead aside, if it be hearkened to by thee. The Lord show thee the snares and dangers to which thou art liable, and lead thee out of them; that whatever hindereth may be discovered to thee, and thy mind singly joined to that which discovereth, that so it may be removed out of the way; and all crooked things be made straight in thee, and the rough plain, and the high low, and the low high, and the weak and foolish strong and wise, and the wise and strong weak and foolish. Oh! wait to feel and understand my words, that thy conversation may be ordered aright by the power and wisdom of God; and that thou mayst inwardly come to witness the glorious coming of Him, who is the salvation of God, and in whom thou shalt not fail to see the salvation of God.

Thou must be very low, weak, and foolish, that the seed may arise in thee to exalt thee, and become thy strength and wisdom; and thou must die exceedingly, again and again, more and more, inwardly and deeply! that thy life may spring up from the holy root and stock; and thou mayest be more and more gathered into it, spring up into it, and live alone in the life, virtue, and power thereof. The travel is long, the exercises many, the snares, temptations, and dangers many; and yet the mercy, relief, and help is great also.

Oh that thou mayst feel thy calling and election, thy sinking down, springing up, and establishment in the pure seed, in the light and righteousness thereof over all; that thou mayst sing songs of degrees to the Redeemer of Israel, and mayest daily more and more partake of and rejoice in him, who is our joy, and the crown thereof.

Thy friend, in the most sincere, tender love,

I. P.

11th of Fifth Month, 1677.

To Thomas Walmsley.

Friend T. W.,

God is love: and he giveth love, and teacheth to love; and with the love which my God hath given me, and wherewith he hath taught me to love, have I loved thee, and sought the everlasting good of thy soul, even as of my own.

This morning, the consideration of thee was strong upon my spirit, how that thou wast stricken in years, and must shortly pass out of this world, and give an account to God; and this earnest desire was in my heart, that thou mightest be fitted and rightly prepared, to give such an account, as the Lord, the great, righteous and impartial Judge, might own and approve of, to thy eternal joy: for which end, two things were upon my heart to propose to thee, to be rightly considered by thee.

One is, whether thou canst truly say, as in God's sight, that thou hast known and experienced *Christ within*, redeeming thee from sin *within*. Hath Christ indeed brought salvation home to thy heart? Hast thou known his inward, living power, breaking the strength and power of Satan within thee? Hast thou known Him stronger than the strong man inwardly? Hast thou first known Christ knock at the door of thy heart, and opened to and let him in; and afterwards experienced *what* he doth in the heart, where he is let in? Or hast thou had only a notional knowledge and belief concerning Christ *without*, and never known what it was to have the Son *revealed in thee?* Oh that thou mightst know, and experimentally understand this Scripture, before thou go hence and be no more seen,—"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin;"—and this other also,—"He that is Christ's hath crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The Lord God make thee truly weighty and serious, and rightly considerate, and give thee true, unerring judgment; that thou mayst not be deceived about this thing, which is of such deep and everlasting concernment to thy soul!

The other is, whether thou dost experience the sprinkling of the blood of the Lord Jesus upon thy conscience. The Jews were saved by the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb outwardly. The Lamb of God taketh away the sins of the world, by the sprinkling of his blood inwardly. Now, I beseech thee, consider: hast thou only a notion of Christ's blood as it was shed without, or dost thou also know the sprinkling within in thy own heart? Hath God made that new covenant, the everlasting covenant with thee, wherein the blood of sprinkling is felt, and the precious effects of it experienced? for then, indeed, iniquities are forgiven, and sin remembered no more; but the soul comes to witness real justification from sin, and that peace which passeth understanding, which no man can give or take away; neither doth any man know what it is, but he that hath it. Oh that thou mayst know the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and be clothed with it, that thou mayst stand justified in God's sight for ever, at that great day!

I. P.

12th of Eleventh Month, 1677.

To George Winkfield.

Dear Friend,

Two things stick upon my heart, since our last short discourse at the window at Kings, through my desire that it may go well with thee, and that thou mayst be right in God's sight.

One is, that saying of thine about thy love to truth and Friends, as if it were as great as ever it was. Now, I entreat thee to weigh this thing, and to wait on God to know, whether it be really so or no; which thou mayst understand by this: if thou be as really desirous, and waitest, as singly, to know and obey the commands of truth as ever, then, thy love to it is as great as formerly in its first heat and zeal; otherwise not. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them," saith Christ, "he it is that loveth me." John xiv. 21. And hereby, we know that our knowledge

of him is true and living; because it leads, quickens, and enables us to the keeping of his commandments. 1 John. ii. 3.

The other is, that thou saidst, thy heart is not hardened. Oh! consider this seriously; for, if thy heart be hardened, and thou not sensible of it, thy estate is exceeding dangerous. Now, if the Lord by his power hath preserved thee out of that which hardens the heart; then, without doubt, thy heart is not hardened: but if the enemy hath tempted thee to let in reasonings into thy mind, against any thing that is indeed of God; and thou hast run into any practices contrary to truth, and justifiest them in thy heart, from any reasonings and thoughts the enemy hath suggested to and strengthened thy mind in; then, without doubt, thy heart is so far hardened. It is impossible for thee, or any one else, to let in that which hardens, and not be hardened.

Oh! mind that precious advice of the Apostle. Heb. iii. 13. Mark, sin deceives, lust deceives, desire after any thing that pleaseth the flesh, and is desirable to the worldly nature, deceives. And whoever is deceived by it, and lets it in (mind, he doth not let it in as an evil thing, but is deceived by it), his heart is hardened against that which would show him the evil of it, and draw his mind from it, if he did in truth hearken to it, and were not lulled asleep in the deceit. And there must be a daily watching against that which deceives and hardens, as the apostle there adviseth them to exhort one another unto, lest the enemy at any time catch any of them in the snare of sin, and so harden them.

Now, he that would not provoke the Lord to give him up to full hardness, must take heed of the degrees thereof; and happy is he who so doth. O G. W.! consider, as before the Lord, whether thy walking be answerable to truth, so far as thou knowest truth; and whether thou art willingly ignorant of any thing, which the good God is willing and ready to give thee the knowledge of, that thou mayst take the more liberty to the flesh in that, which the life of truth, if felt, would soon condemn and draw from.

This is in most sincere love to thee, from him who hath always been thy friend.

I. P.

11th of 12th Month, 1677.

To Sir William Drake (so styled).

First, There is a God, a holy, righteous, living, powerful God, who made heaven and earth, and all things therein; and at last made man in his own image, and set him over the works of his hands, to have dominion, and to rule in his wisdom and power over them; and to guide, order, and make use of them, to the glory of Him that made them. Now, in this state, God was pleased and took delight in the works of his hands, and in man above all.

Secondly, Man, sinning against his Maker, lost this image, which was his glory, and became brutish in understanding, and an enemy to God in his mind, and liable to the wrath of God's holy and righteous nature.

Thirdly, There is no reconciliation to be had between God and man any more, but by the change of this nature in man: for God is unchangeable, he is light, he is life, he is holiness unchangeable; and will never be reconciled to, or have fellowship with, darkness, with that which is dead and unholy,—which man in his fallen estate is, until he be begotten again to God, changed and renewed from his evil and sinful nature, into a good and holy nature, and till he be turned from evil works, and know what it is to be the workmanship of God, created anew unto good works.

Fourthly, Nothing can produce this change in man, but the Spirit and power of Christ, but the grace and truth which is by Jesus Christ. Therefore a man had need be sure that he receive this Spirit and power, and that he feel the operative, changing virtue of it, and be really changed thereby, being created anew, begotten anew to God, in the holiness and righteousness of truth, a son and servant to the living God; or he can never know what belongs to true

reconciliation with God, and to fellowship with him in the light and life of his Son.

Fifthly, All the religions and professions upon the face of the earth, which fall short of this Spirit, life, and power, and wherein this new creation in Christ Jesus is not witnessed, nor power received to abstain from what is evil, and to become sons to God, are not the pure, powerful, gospel religion, wherein the divine virtue and power of life operates; but that which men in the earthly wisdom have formed without life. And all religions that have but a form of godliness, and not the power, are to be turned away from, and witnessed against, by such as are called forth to be witnesses to the true, gospel religion and way of worship, which stands in Spirit, life, and power.

Sixthly, This religion and worship, which stands in Spirit, life, and power, is the religion and worship which Christ set up about sixteen hundred years ago. John iv. 23, 24. 1 Cor. iv. 20. Rom. vi. 4. And this is the religion which God hath revived and set up again, as they that receive the gospel now preach it; and believing in the power, which is both outwardly testified of, and also inwardly revealed, they have the witness of it in their own hearts. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. 1 John v. 10, 11, 12. Isa. liii. 1. Oh, how sweet are these scriptures, when they are rightly read and rightly understood, the Lord giving the right understanding, and leading into the true experience of them!

Friend,

Thou expressed to one of my youngest sons, as he related to me, that thou hadst a desire I should visit thee, that thou mightst have some discourse with me about religion. That is the most profitable kind of discourse that can be, if it be ordered in the fear of the Lord, and in a weighty sense and dread of him. I am very serious in reference to religion, and would not therein mistake or miscarry, by any means; and if I might be helpful to thee, or to any man, as to the truth and power of religion, it would be matter of gladness to my heart, and of praising and blessing the Lord, in the

sense of his stretching forth his hand towards the saving of any. Now, that our meeting and discourse may be the more solemn and advantageous, I have sent thee a few plain propositions to consider of; which I do not only find signified of in the Scriptures, but the Lord hath also written them on my heart; and if they be plain to thee, and thou be also in the serious sense of them, it may tend towards the making of our discourse the more easy and profitable.

These are the main things; and he that is rightly grounded, I mean, in the true and sensible experience of them in his heart, cannot miss of God's guidance to make a safe and happy progress therein; he daily waiting upon the Lord, to be taught and led by him, further and further, into the life, Spirit, and power of truth; so that he shall be taught of God to know his Son Jesus Christ, and the freedom which is by the truth as it is in Jesus, daily more and more; which it is my soul's sincere and single desire, that thou, thy wife, and family may be experiencers and happy partakers of.

Oh, what a glorious state was man once in, before his transgressing the holy law of God! but when he sinned, how did he fall short of the glory of God! Yet, as he hears His voice, and follows Him, that leads out of sin into the image of God, into the holiness and righteousness of truth; how is he brought back by the Lord, and how doth he return, in the blessed leadings of God's blessed Spirit, into the glory of God again! Read 2 Cor. iii. 18; and, oh that thou mayst livingly and sensibly know what it means!

I remain an acknowledger of thy kindness, and a desirer for thee, that thou mayst obtain from God the knowledge of himself and his Son, which is experienced, by them that receive it, to be, indeed life eternal.

I. P.

This was written in true love and good-will, and in the fear of the Lord, and in the springings and openings of his life in my heart.

19th of Fifth Month, 1678.

To the Women's Meeting of Friends in the Truth, at John Mannock's.

Dear Friends,

Dearly beloved and honored in the Lord, because of his honorable presence and power, which is so preciously manifested and found to be among you in your meetings.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath thus gathered you! and given you hearts to meet together, to feel his precious presence and power, and wait to do his will therein, as he shall please to call, and make your way clear thereto. And, blessed be the Lord! who doth encourage and reward you daily, and make your meetings pleasant and advantageous to your own souls, and towards the seasoning and holy watching over the several respective places where your lot is fallen.

Oh! what could the Lord do more for his people, than to turn them to that pure seed of life, which will make them all alive, and keep them all in life and purity; and then to make use of every living member in the living body, as his Spirit shall please to breathe upon it, and his power actuate it? And indeed, there is need of all the life and power to the body, which the Lord sees good to bestow on any member of it; every member of the body having life given it, not only for itself, but likewise for the use and service of the body. Only, dear Friends, here is to be the great care, that every member keep within the limits of life, wherein its capacity and ability for service lies, and out of which, it can do no real service for God, or to the body. Oh, therefore, eye life, eye the power, eye the presence of the Lord with your spirits! that he may go along with you, and guide you in every thought ye think, in every word ye speak, in reference to his work and service.

And mind, Friends, what is now upon me to you: it is one thing, to sit waiting to feel the power, and to keep within the limits of the power, thus far; and another, yea, and harder, to feel and keep within the sense and limits of

the power, when ye come to act. Then your reasonings, your wisdom, your apprehensions, have more advantage to get up in you, and to put themselves forth. Oh! therefore, watch narrowly and diligently against the forward part; and keep back to the life, which, though it rise more slowly, yet acts more surely and safely for God.

Oh, wait and watch, to feel your Keeper keeping you within the holy bounds and limits, within the pure fear, within the living sense, while ye are acting for your God! that ye may only be his instruments, and feel him acting in you. Therefore every one wait to feel the Judge risen and up, and the judgment set, in your own hearts; that, what ariseth in you, may be judged, and nothing may pass from you publicly, but what hath first passed the pure judgment in your own breasts. And let the holy rule of the blessed apostle James, be always upon your spirits, "Let every one be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Oh, let not a talkativeness have place in any of you! but, abide in such gravity, modesty, and weightiness of spirit, as becomes the judgment-seat of the Spirit and power of the Lord. Ye can never wait too much for the power, nor can ye ever act too much in the power; but ye may easily act too much without it.

And as for this troublesome, contentious business (if the Lord should yet order it to be brought before you), the Lord teach you to consider of, and manage it in a wise, tender, and healing spirit. Ye must distinguish in judgment, if ye judge aright, between enemies and erring friends. And take heed of the quickness and strength of reason, or of the natural part, which avails little: but wait for the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, which reaches to the witness and doth the work. Are they in a snare? are they overtaken in a fault? yea, are they in measure blinded and hardened, so that they can neither see nor feel, as to this particular? Retire, sit still awhile, and travail for them. Feel how life will arise in any of you, and how mercy will reach towards them; and how living words, from the tender sense, may be reached forth to their hearts, deeply, by the hand of

the Lord, for their good. And if ye find them, at length, bowing to the Lord, oh, let tender compassion help them forwards! that what hath been so troublesome and groundedly dissatisfactory in the progress, may, at length, have a sweet issue for their good, and our joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

So, my dear friends, the Lord be with you, and guide you in this, and in all that he shall further call you to; and multiply his presence, power, and blessings upon you, and make your meetings as serviceable to the honor of his name, as he himself would have them, and as you yourselves can desire them to be.

Your friend and brother in the tender truth, and in the pure love and precious life.

I. P.

19th of Fifth Month, 1678.

To those Persons that Drink of the Waters at Astrop Wells.

There is a great God, the Creator of all things, who gave man a being here in this world; to whom every man must give an account, when he goes out of this world.

This great God, who loves mankind, and would not have them perish, is nigh unto man, to teach him the fear, which is due from him to God. The man that learns this pure fear of God is daily exercised by it in departing from evil, both in thought, word, and deed, and in doing that which is good in his sight.

There is likewise another teacher near man, who is also ready to teach such as do not know God, or fear God, that which is dishonorable to the great God, who made man a vessel of honor, and to be to his glory. They that learn of this teacher learn not to fear God, or to do good, but to please themselves in doing evil, both in thought, word, and deed. Oh! what account will all such give, when they go out of this world, and come to be judged by the great God (who is of pure eyes, and cannot behold iniquity), when all

their sins are set in order by him before them, and just judgment proportioned by him thereunto? Oh! why do men forget God their Creator, days without number, hearkening to him who first deceived them, doing the will of the deceiver and destroyer of souls, and not the will of the blessed Creator and Saviour?

Oh, hearken to wisdom's counsel, when she cries in the secret of your hearts against that which is evil, and contrary to the nature, life, and will of God; lest a day of calamity from God come upon you, and then ye cry unto the pitiful and tender God, and his face be turned against you, and he refuse to show mercy to you! Read Prov. i. 20, to the end of the chapter; and the Lord give you the weighty consideration and true understanding of it for your soul's good, and for the reclaiming of you from any thing that is evil, and destructive to your souls.

This is written in tender love unto you, from one who pities and loves you, and desires your prosperity in this world, and your everlasting happiness with God for ever.

I. P.

Astrop, 15th of Sixth Month, 1678.

To Such as Drink of the Waters at Astrop Wells.

I entreat you to consider what is within written for your eternal good; and be not deceived by the enemy of your souls, in things of an everlasting concern.

Some queries propounded to your consideration, in the tender melting love of my heart towards your everlasting welfare.

First query. Is not the great God, who created heaven and earth, light, pure light, spiritual light, eternal light, in whom is no darkness at all? 1 John i. 5.

Second query. Is not man, in his natural, unregenerate, corrupt state, darkness? And can he possibly, in that state,

nation, must wait for the inward manifesting and revealing of the grace and truth in his heart; and must receive it, and be subject to it, learning of the grace, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts in every kind; and he must learn of the truth as it is in Jesus, to deny whatever is contrary to the life, nature, and Spirit of Jesus. He must likewise learn of the grace and truth to fear God; to turn from all false, invented worships and ways of men, and to worship God, the Father of spirits, in spirit and in truth: and as he learns and practises this, he will also learn of the grace and truth to live soberly and righteously in this present world, yea, and godly also, even as the holy God would have him; for God would have men live no otherwise, than as his grace and truth teaches them. Now God's grace and truth, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is written in the inward parts, do not only teach that which is good, and to deny and depart from that which is evil, but give ability so to do. "My grace is sufficient for thee," said God to Paul. And the truth of Jesus, revealed inwardly, hath virtue and power in it; insomuch that they who receive the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, receive power to become sons to God. For the grace, the truth, is not a notional thing, but hath the virtue and power of life, and mortification in it; and they that truly receive it, partake of its virtue and power in operation and exercise of it in their hearts, and are thereby really made dead unto sin, and alive unto God.

So then, he that knows the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, receives it, learns of it, is subject to it, and partakes of its virtue and power, he knows Christ unto salvation; but he that knows not, receives not, is not subject to the grace, doth not experience the sufficiency of the grace, nor witness ability and power through it to become a son to God, and to do the will of God,—he doth not yet at all know the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of his soul, notwithstanding whatsoever he may profess or believe concerning him.

I. P.

Astrop, 28th of Sixth Month, 1678.

pleaseth the corrupt part in themselves? Will they not be separated, when they go out of this world, from God, who is light, and have their portion with dark spirits, in utter darkness? 2 Thess. i. 6, to 10. See also Matt. xxv. 30.

Oh, consider these things, while ye have time, for your souls' eternal good! that ye miss not of the holy way of life and salvation, and so perish; whom God would not have perish, but stretcheth forth his hand of love, by his inward "light of life," effectually to save your souls.

I. P.

Astrop, 20th of Sixth Month, 1678.

To one who sent a Message to him from Astrop Wells.

I had no end in writing or sending those papers, but true love to your immortal souls; that ye might seriously consider thereof, and be found in the practice of them, and so be happy for ever. For as Christ said to his disciples, so it is with me in this case towards you, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." I have felt the sweetness and great benefit of the practice of them, which I heartily desire ye may also experience.

I here send enclosed a token of my love to thee in particular, which thy courteous message drew from me. It contains, in a few words, the true path-way of salvation; which, though thou mayst know already, yet the reading and serious consideration thereof may not be unserviceable to thee.

I am thy friend, in true love and desires for thee,

I. P.

The Plain Path-way of Salvation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour.

Grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ saves by the grace and truth which comes by him.

For it is the grace of God that brings salvation, and it is the truth, as it in Jesus, which makes free indeed.

He, therefore, that would be saved from sin and condem-

nation, must wait for the inward manifesting and revealing of the grace and truth in his heart: and must receive it, and be subject to it, learning of the grace to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts in every kind: and he must learn of the truth as it is in Jesus, to deny whatever is contrary to the life, nature, and Spirit of Jesus. He must likewise learn of the grace and truth to fear God: to turn from all false, invented worships and ways of men, and to worship God, the Father of spirits, in spirit and in truth: and as he learns and practises this, he will also learn of the grace and truth to live soberly and righteously in this present world, yea, and godly also, even as the holy God would have him; for God would have men live no otherwise, than as his grace and truth teaches them. Now God's grace and truth, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is written in the inward parts, do not only teach that which is good, and to deny and depart from that which is evil, but give ability so to do. "My grace is sufficient for thee," said God to Paul. And the truth of Jesus, revealed inwardly, hath virtue and power in it; insomuch that they who receive the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, receive power to become sons to God. For the grace, the truth, is not a notional thing, but hath the virtue and power of life, and mortification in it; and they that truly receive it, partake of its virtue and power in operation and exercise of it in their hearts, and are thereby really made dead unto sin, and alive unto God.

So then, he that knows the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, receives it, learns of it, is subject to it, and partakes of its virtue and power, he knows Christ unto salvation; but he that knows not, receives not, is not subject to the grace, doth not experience the sufficiency of the grace, nor witness ability and power through it to become a son to God, and to do the will of God,—he doth not yet at all know the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of his soul, notwithstanding whatsoever he may profess or believe concerning him.

I. P.

Astrop, 28th of Sixth Month, 1678.

To the Women Friends that meet at Armscot in Worcestershire.

Dear Friends,

In your meetings together to do service for the Lord, be every one of you very careful and diligent in watching to his power, that ye may have the sensible, living feeling of it, each of you in your own hearts, and in the hearts one of another; and that ye may keep within the limits of it, and not think, or speak, or act beyond it. And know, oh! wait more and more to know, how to keep *that* silence, which is of the power; that in every one of you, what the power would have silent, may be silent. Oh! take heed of the forwardness of the flesh, the wisdom of the flesh, the will of the flesh, the talkativeness of the flesh; keep them back, oh! let them for ever be kept back in every one of you, by the presence and virtue of the power.

The power is the authority and blessing of your meetings, and therein lies your ability to perform what God requires; be sure ye have it with you. Keep back to the life, keep low in the holy fear, and ye shall not miss of it. You will find it easy to transgress, easy to set up self, easy to run into sudden apprehensions about things, and one to be of this mind and another of that; but feel the power to keep down all this, and to keep you out of all this; every one watching to the life, when and where it will arise to help you, and that ye may be sensible of it when it doth arise, and not in a wrong wisdom oppose it, but be one with it. And thus, if any thing should arise from the wrong wisdom in any, ye may be sensible of it, not defiled or entangled with it, but abiding in that which sees through it and judges it; that so, life may reign in your hearts and in your meetings, above that which will be forward, and perking over the life, if ye be not very watchful.

So the Lord God of my life be with you, and season your hearts with his grace and truth, and daily keep you in the savor thereof; that ye may be blessed by him, and a bless-

ing in his hands; all that is evil and contrary to truth being kept down in your own hearts, ye will be fit to keep down evil in the minds and hearts of others; and if any thing be unsavory anywhere, it will be searched into, judged, cast out, and the recovery of the soul which hath let it in sought, that if possible it may be restored; and then, ye will know the joy of seeking out and bringing back the lost sheep. And be tender to others, in true compassion, as ye would be tendered by others, if ye were in their conditions.

There is that near you, which will guide you; oh! wait for it, and be sure ye keep to it; that, being innocent and faithful, in following the Lord in the leadings of his power, his power may plead your cause in the hearts of all his tender people hereabouts; and they may see and acknowledge, that your meetings are of God,—that ye are guided by him into that way of service, in his holy fear, in which he himself is with you, and by the movings of his Holy Spirit in your hearts, hath engaged you. Be not hasty, either in conceiving any thing in your minds, or in speaking it forth, or in any thing ye are to do; but feel him by his Spirit and life going along with you, and leading you into what he would have any of you, or every one of you do. If ye be in the true feeling sense of what the Lord your God would have done, and join with what is of God, as it riseth in any, or against any thing that is not of God, as it is made manifest among you; ye are all in your places and proper services, obeying the blessed will, and doing the blessed work, of the Lord your God.

I had somewhat upon me yesterday to you, but my weakness was great. This morning, this lay as a weight upon my spirit to lay upon yours; may the weight of it come upon you, to weigh down whatever is light or chaffy in any of you, that the seed of life may come up over it, and ye may be weighty before the Lord, in the weighty seed of life. The Lord make you rightly serviceable to him, and truly glorious in your meetings, and in your several places. Ye will find a great work to keep one part down, that that

which is pure and living of God may come up in you, and ye act only in it, not exceeding the limits of it.

I. P.

Written at John Hawford's,
7th of Seventh Month, 1678.

To S. W.

Dear Friend,

I ever had a love to thee, and a deep sense of the serious work of God upon thy heart, and the upright desires of thy soul after Him. And, that the Lord should yet preserve thee alive, in the midst of so great and languishing weakness, is wonderful in my eye, and I hope, hath a tendency of some honor to his name, and good to thee. I have often inquired of late concerning thee, and was glad to understand what I inquired after, by a letter from thy own hand; upon reading whereof, in the retired sense of my heart, I felt love arise to thee, and breathings to the Lord for thee; and, oh that thou mayst fully feel, and be joined to the seed of life, the seed of the kingdom, which our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, did not disdain to be a preacher of.

O my dear friend! let not any part of thy life lie in notions above the seed, but let it all lie in the seed itself, in thy waiting upon the Lord for its arisings in thee, and in thy feeling its arisings. Oh! what becomes of flesh, and self, and self-righteousness, when this lives in the heart? My religion, which I now daily bless my God for, began in this seed; which, when I first felt, and discerningly knew from the Lord, my cry to him was, oh, this is it I have longed after and waited for! Oh, unite my soul to thee in this for ever! this is thy Son's gift from thee, thy Son's grace, thy Son's truth, thy Son's life, thy Son's Spirit! I desire no more, than to be made nothing in myself, that this may be all in me: and what I meet with and witness here, what I feel the Lord Jesus Christ to be made to me here, none knows, or possibly can know, but they that have felt the

pure power of the Spirit of life, and have been led by it into the same holy and blessed experience.

Ah! sin hath no share here, in this blessed seed; but is excluded by the life and power which is stronger than it. Here Christ is formed in the soul, of a truth, here the black garments of unrighteousness, yea, of man's righteousness too, are put off, and the white raiment put on; here the holy image is brought forth in the heart, even the image of the dear Son, which partakes of the divine nature of the Father; here the soul is new created in Christ Jesus, here is no deceit in any kind met with, but only truth from God, even the true life, light, virtue, power, of the Lord Jesus Christ, as livingly felt in the heart, and as effectually operating there, as ever the power of sin did. Oh that thou mightst daily discern this, and feel this to grow up in thee more and more, and die to all notions, even of the heavenly things themselves, out of this; that thy soul may fully live in the life, Spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; and nothing but his life, Spirit, and power may live in thee; to the glory of God the Father, and to the great joy and gladdening of thy heart in his presence! Amen.

Thy friend, in the true, sincere love of the heavenly, everlasting seed.

L. P.

13th of Twelfth Month, 1678.

To the Lady Conway.

Dear Friend,

In tender love, and in a sense of thy sore afflictions and exercises, I do most dearly salute thee; desiring for thee, that the work of the Lord in thy heart may not be interrupted by any devices of the enemy; but that it may go on and prosper in thee, in the springing up of the pure seed of life in thy heart, and in the powerful overturning, by the mighty arm of the Lord, of all that is contrary thereto in thee. Oh that thou mayst daily feel that holy birth of life, which is begotten by the Father, and lives by faith in him!

I say, oh that thou mayst daily feel it living in thee, when temptations and trials on every hand increase—feel the birth of life, which will cry to the Father, "Lord, increase my faith!"

Though sorrows, heaviness, and faintings of heart ever so much increase; yet, if thy faith increase also, it will bear thee up in the midst of them. I would fain have it go well with thee, and that thou mightst not want the Reprover, in any thing that is to be reproved in thee; nor the Comforter, in any respect wherein thy soul wants comfort; nor the holy Counsellor and Adviser, in any strait or difficulty which the wise and tender God orders to befall thee.

Ah! that thou mightst come to feel the daily wasting of sin and death, and the daily springing of life and holiness in thy heart. The pearl is worth thousands of worlds, with the greatest earthly glory and pleasure imaginable. Oh that thou mayst be taught of God to discern it more and more, and to buy it, and to come into the enjoyment and possession of it! The Lord manifest Zion more and more to thee, and show thee the glory of it, and set thy feet towards it; and put into thy heart to seek of him the way to it, renewing thee more and more in the spirit of thy mind, whereby the way comes clearly to be discerned, and faithfully walked in; that thou mayst witness, daily, the everlasting covenant of life and peace, even the sure mercies of David.

The desire of my soul is, that thy afflictions, which how grievous soever, yet are but momentary, may fit thee for, and work out, an eternal weight of glory, for thy soul to inherit in another world, for ever.

I remain a sympathizer with thee in thy sufferings; who desire all the advantage and blessings from the God of my life may come to thee, which hardships, temptations, and trials prepare the heart and make way for.

I. P.

14th of 12th Month, 1678.

POSTSCRIPT.

[illegible] dear Friend,

[illegible] the foregoing, this arose in me [illegible] waiting upon him, to search [illegible] please to show thee any [illegible] on my heart to thee: [illegible] the one hand, or excusing [illegible] beneath thyself, retir- [illegible] receive from the Lord true [illegible] strength against it. And [illegible] that thou must be weak- [illegible] in or with thy weak and [illegible] receive mercy and strength [illegible] art weakened and distressed, [illegible] the more abundantly shalt [illegible] and strength; waiting upon him [illegible] and resigned spirit, which he [illegible] into: that, in the issue of all, [illegible] fruits of righteousness and heav- [illegible] Amen, so be it from the Lord to [illegible]

To S. W.

Dear S. W.

I have ever had a love to thee, and have many times been filled with earnest desires for thee; that thou mayst know the Lord in his own pure teachings, and travel into and dwell in the fulness of the kingdom of his dear Son; and that thou mayst be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

In order to arrive here, thou must wait to know God and Christ, in the mystery of their Spirit, life, and power; and by that Spirit, life, and power, find the secrets of the mystery of darkness searched and purged out, and the mystery of godliness opened and established in thy heart, in the

room thereof;—Christ formed inwardly; the soul formed, yea, and created inwardly anew in him; a real transplanting into his death, and a real feeling of his springing and rising life; and an experience of the sweetness, safety, and virtue of his rising life; and daily to be sensible, what it is to lie down in the holy, quickening power, and to rise again in the risings of the life and power; and so be only what thou art made and preserved to be, in the light, grace, life, virtue, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; and to feel him remove any thing that is unrighteous, and clothing thee with his pure life, Spirit, and righteousness.

Oh! this is indeed the pure, precious, living knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; which all the outward knowledge tends to lead to, and is comprehended and ended in. This is the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, which Paul was so ravished with, and counted all things but dross and dung for. Now, that thou mayst obtain this, mind the inward appearance, the root, the fountain, the rock within, the living stone within,—its openings, its springings, its administering life to thee; and take heed of running into the outwardness of openings concerning the heavenly things; but keep, oh learn to keep, oh mind to keep, in the inwardness of life within! This is the everlasting habitation of the birth which is begotten and brought forth, bred up and kept alive, alone by the presence, power, and operation of the living Spirit; and the Lord Jesus is that Spirit, as really as he was man, even the holy, heavenly, immaculate, spotless Lamb of God. And in this state, life reigns in the heart, and the horn of the Holy One is exalted, the head of the serpent crushed, yea, Satan trod under foot, by the God of peace; who would have his children dwell in the sweetness and fulness of the gospel, in the peace, life, righteousness, and joy of his blessed Spirit and power.

Oh! who would not desire after and wait for and walk with the Lord, towards the obtaining and possessing of these things? All the promises, in Christ, are yea and amen. Inward victory is promised; the inward presence

nation, must wait for the inward manifesting and revealing of the grace and truth in his heart; and must receive it, and be subject to it, learning of the grace, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts in every kind; and he must learn of the truth as it is in Jesus, to deny whatever is contrary to the life, nature, and Spirit of Jesus. He must likewise learn of the grace and truth to fear God; to turn from all false, invented worships and ways of men, and to worship God, the Father of spirits, in spirit and in truth: and as he learns and practises this, he will also learn of the grace and truth to live soberly and righteously in this present world, yea, and godlily also, even as the holy God would have him; for God would have men live no otherwise, than as his grace and truth teaches them. Now God's grace and truth, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is written in the inward parts, do not only teach that which is good, and to deny and depart from that which is evil, but give ability so to do. "My grace is sufficient for thee," said God to Paul. And the truth of Jesus, revealed inwardly, hath virtue and power in it; insomuch that they who receive the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, receive power to become sons to God. For the grace, the truth, is not a notional thing, but hath the virtue and power of life, and mortification in it; and they that truly receive it, partake of its virtue and power in operation and exercise of it in their hearts, and are thereby really made dead unto sin, and alive unto God.

So then, he that knows the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, receives it, learns of it, is subject to it, and partakes of its virtue and power, he knows Christ unto salvation; but he that knows not, receives not, is not subject to the grace, doth not experience the sufficiency of the grace, nor witness ability and power through it to become a son to God, and to do the will of God,—he doth not yet at all know the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of his soul, notwithstanding whatsoever he may profess or believe concerning him.

I. P.

Astrop, 28th of Sixth Month, 1678.

To the Women Friends that meet at Armscot in Worcestershire.

Dear Friends,

In your meetings together to do service for the Lord, be every one of you very careful and diligent in watching to his power, that ye may have the sensible, living feeling of it, each of you in your own hearts, and in the hearts one of another; and that ye may keep within the limits of it, and not think, or speak, or act beyond it. And know, oh! wait more and more to know, how to keep *that* silence, which is of the power; that in every one of you, what the power would have silent, may be silent. Oh! take heed of the forwardness of the flesh, the wisdom of the flesh, the will of the flesh, the talkativeness of the flesh; keep them back, oh! let them for ever be kept back in every one of you, by the presence and virtue of the power.

The power is the authority and blessing of your meetings, and therein lies your ability to perform what God requires; be sure ye have it with you. Keep back to the life, keep low in the holy fear, and ye shall not miss of it. You will find it easy to transgress, easy to set up self, easy to run into sudden apprehensions about things, and one to be of this mind and another of that; but feel the power to keep down all this, and to keep you out of all this; every one watching to the life, when and where it will arise to help you, and that ye may be sensible of it when it doth arise, and not in a wrong wisdom oppose it, but be one with it. And thus, if any thing should arise from the wrong wisdom in any, ye may be sensible of it, not defiled or entangled with it, but abiding in that which sees through it and judges it; that so, life may reign in your hearts and in your meetings, above that which will be forward, and perking over the life, if ye be not very watchful.

So the Lord God of my life be with you, and season your hearts with his grace and truth, and daily keep you in the savor thereof; that ye may be blessed by him, and a bless-

more and more enclosed, watered, dressed, and delighted in by him.

This is a salutation of love from thy friend in the truth, which lives and changes not.

I. P.

27th of Twelfth Month, 1678.

To M. Hiorns.

Dear Friend,

I received two letters from thee lately, whereby the sense is revived in me of thy great love to me, and the Lord's great goodness to thee, in administering that which rejoiceth and refresheth thee.

Now, this advice ariseth in my heart. Oh! keep cool and low before the Lord, that the seed, the pure, living seed, may spring more and more in thee, and thy heart be united more and more to the Lord therein. Coolness of spirit is a precious frame; and the glory of the Lord most shines *therein*, in its own lustre and brightness; and when the soul is low before the Lord, it is still near the seed, and preciously (in its life) one with the seed. And when the seed riseth, thou shalt have liberty in the Lord to rise with it; only take heed of that part which will be outrunning it, and getting above it, and so, not ready to descend again, and keep low in the deeps with it.

O my friend! I have a sense, that this hath been the error of that people that thou hast formerly walked with: and I observe in thy spirit yet a liability thereto; which the Lord give thee to watch against, that thou mayst come to a pure observation and discerning of the everlasting, unchangeable seed in thy own heart, and mayst daily feel thy mind bowed down and worship in it, become wholly leavened into it, and perfectly changed and preserved by it.

POSTSCRIPT.

We are here but awhile in this world, for the Lord to

make use of us, and serve himself by us; and so, by his ordering of us, to fit us for the crown of glory, which he will give us fully to wear in the other world. Now, feel the child's nature, which chooseth nothing, but desires the fulfilling of the Father's will in it. I cannot desire to enjoy any thing (saith the nature of the true birth), but as the Father, of himself, pleaseth to give me to enjoy. There is a time to want, as well as to abound, while we are in this world. And the times of wanting, as well as abounding, are greatly advantageous to us. How should faith, love, patience, meekness, and the excellency and sufficiency of God's grace shine, but by, in, and through the many exercises and varieties of conditions, wherewith the Lord visiteth his? Yea, the greatest in the life, power, and glory of the Lord, have the greatest trials and exercises, which is to their advantage, as also for the good and benefit of others, and to the great honor and glory of the Lord. Oh! at all times, and in all conditions, take heed of a will, take heed of a wisdom, above the seed's will, and above the seed's wisdom.

Let the Lord alone be all in thee, and make thee every day what he pleaseth; and, in due time, thou shalt know a life,—even the seed's life, the Son's life,—whom all of the angels are to worship,—and the mystery of whose life the angels desire to look into, as it is revealed and brought forth! So, be still and quiet, and silent before the Lord; not putting up any request to the Father, nor cherishing any desire in thee, but in the seed's lowly nature and purely springing life; and the Lord give thee the clear discerning, in the lowly seed, of all that springs and arises in thy heart.

Thou didst read precious things of the seed when thou wast here, written outwardly; oh that thou mightst read the same things, written inwardly in thy own heart; which that thou mayst do, become as a weaned child, not exercising thyself in things too high or too wonderful for thee. Every secret thing, every spiritual mystery, but what God opens to thee, is too high and wonderful for thee. And if the Lord at any time open to thee deep mysteries, fear be-

fore the Lord; and go no further into them than the Lord leads thee. The error is still in the comprehending, knowing mind, but never in the lowly, weighty seed of life;—whither the Lord God of my life more and more lead thee, and counsel thee to take up thy dwelling place there, daily instructing thee so to do. For the greatest, as well as the least, must be daily taught of the Lord, both in ascending and descending, or they will miss their way; yea, they must be daily taught of him to be silent before him, and know [what it is] to be *still in him*, or they will be apt to miss in either.

This from thy friend,

I. P.

Amersham, Woodside, 4th of Fifth Month, 1679.

To Sarah Elgar.

The child which the Lord hath taken from thee was his own. He hath done thee no wrong, in calling it from thee. Take heed of murmuring, take heed of discontent, take heed of any grief, but what truth allows thee. Thou hast yet one child left. The Lord may call for that too, if he please; or he may continue and bless it to thee. Oh, mind a right frame of Spirit towards the Lord, in this thy great affliction! If thou mind God's truth in thy heart, and wait to feel the seasoning thereof, that will bring thee into, and preserve thee in a right frame of spirit. The Lord will not condemn thy love and tenderness to thy child, or thy tender remembrance of him; but still, in it be subject to the Lord, and let his will and disposal be bowed unto by thee, and not the will of thy nature set above it. Retire out of the natural, into the spiritual, where thou mayst feel the Lord thy portion; so that now, in the needful time, thou mayest day by day receive and enjoy satisfaction therein. Oh, wait to feel the Lord making thy heart what he would have it to be, in this thy deep and sore affliction!

I. P.

Nunnington, Sixth Month, 1679.

Now, let the world see how thou prizest the truth, and what truth can do for thee. Feed on it; do not feed on thy affliction; and the life of truth will arise in thee, and raise thee up over it, to the honor of the name of the Lord, and to the comfort of thy own soul.

To William Rolls.

Friend,

David saw through the sacrifices and burnt offerings in his time; and the spiritual eye sees through all shadows to the substance, which have no place in the brightness of the day of God: and outward washing is no more than outward circumcision,—no more of a gospel nature,—nor can avail any more, but is of the nature of the things that were to be shaken and pass away; that the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the things which cannot be shaken might remain.

I could say very much to every passage of thy letter; but to what purpose would it be? The Lord give thee a sense, where the true understanding is given, and teach thee aright to wait for it; that thou mayst receive it from him, and thereby discern the nature of that wisdom, from which God hath hid the mystery in all ages and generations, and from which he hides it still; that so thou mayest experimentally know what it is to become a fool in thyself for Christ's sake, that thou mayst be wise in him; concerning which, it is easy to have many notions in the mind, but hard to come to the true experience of.

These are the breathings of my heart for thee, in the flowings of my love; who desire that thou mayst not seek after the knowledge of the Scriptures in that which cannot understand them; but mayst meet with the right key, and the right understanding, wherein thy soul will be safe and happy; which is my heart's desire for thee, who am a real friend and well-wisher to thy soul in the Lord.

I. P.

To the Poor among Friends, who are relieved by the charity and bowels of love, which God opens in other Friends towards them.

O Friends,

Ye ought deeply and often to consider of God's visiting you with his precious truth, whereto being faithful, ye are sure to be happy for ever; how hard soever it should go with you, and how strait soever your condition should be, in reference to the things of this world.

But ye have not only this assurance and benefit by the truth, but ye are also come to partake of a better provision, as to your necessities outwardly, than other poor meet with. For God himself takes care of you, in drawing the hearts of his children to consider of your wants, and make supply unto you; so that many of you are so provided for, as ye had never like to have been while in this world, had it not been for the interest God gives you in the hearts of others, through and because of his truth. Surely this should not be forgotten by you, but daily acknowledged to the Lord, in the use and enjoyment of those things, which ye ought to receive as from his hand, through those who minister to you in his name, and for his sake.

And take heed of murmuring, if the supply answer not any of your expectations; for if we wait upon the Lord, to be ordered and guided by him in this matter, and answerably witness his presence with us, and holy wisdom ordering us in these affairs; your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord. And if ye watch narrowly over yourselves, ye will find it is the unsubdued part, which is apt to be repining and murmuring; but that which is of the Lord, and eyes him, is that which is sensible of his goodness, and thankful to him for it. But if there be judged to be any neglect towards any, or any just cause of complaint; let it, in tenderness, meekness, and the fear of the Lord, be laid before us; and we will wait upon him to give it a due and full consideration, and do therein as the Lord shall open

and guide our hearts. For great exercises of spirit do we meet with in these affairs, and great are our cries of spirit to the Lord, to guide and order us according to his will and holy counsel therein.

And dear Friends, wait to feel that which stays your minds on the Lord, and keeps your eye towards him; and take heed of judging us in things, wherein we truly desire to act singly towards the Lord, and of which we must give an account to him; and if ye in any thing judge us, wherein our God justifies us, certainly the Lord will therein condemn you. Therefore be wary and watchful in this matter.

I. P.

To Sarah Bond.

Dear Sarah,

I have had many thoughts of thee in this my imprisonment; wherein I have seen in spirit thy error and miscarriage, and a hope and expectation in thy heart which will deceive thee.

Oh, how much precious time hast thou lost! wherein thou mightst have been travelling far on thy journey, while thou art disputing in thy mind, and wandering in the deceitful reasonings of thy heart. And indeed, it must not be, it must not be as thou imaginest; but thou must begin low, and be glad of a little light to travel with out of the earthly nature, and be faithful thereunto; and in faithfulness expect additions of light, and so much power as may help thee to rub on. And though thou may be long low, and weak, and little, and ready to perish; yet in the humble and self-denying state, the Father will help thee, and cause his life to shoot up in thee, in the shooting up whereof will be thy redemption.

But, oh hasten, oh hasten out of the earthly nature, whilst thou hast time, or any visitations from the Spirit of the Lord! and do not, in thy wisdom, limit him, but accept what at present comes from him; for the flood is breaking

out, and will swallow up and drown all that are not found in the ark. Oh! therefore enter, enter apace; mind that which checks in thy heart; mind also that which reasons against those checks, to hold thee still in captivity, and to keep thee from travelling out of the earthly nature, spirit, wisdom, and practices; and come out of the spirit and way of this world, that thou mayst live, and not die. For none shall live, but those that walk in the way of life, and leave the paths and course of the dead, in which thou art yet entangled. Oh that thou mightst be loosed, and travel out thence, with a little light and a little help! and not limit the Holy One of Israel in thy desires or expectations, but thankfully receive the smallest visitation that comes from him to thy soul; for there is life and peace in it, and death and perplexity in turning from it. And *this* will not be thy comfort or satisfaction hereafter, to have had a day of visitation and mercy from on high; but to have received the visitation, and to have been turned in it, from the darkness of the earthly mind and nature, into the light of the living and redeemed souls,—this will be comfortable indeed!

And this is my tender counsel to thee: wait for and *gaspingly* receive the checks of the Most High, and take heed of reasoning against them; but as that (though in a low and mean and despicable way to thy wisdom) draws and leads thee out of any earthly thought, word, custom, or practice, follow diligently; not reasoning against it, but waiting to have thy reasonings subdued to the smallest motions and lowest guidance of life in thee. For I know that life is near thee, even the life that would effectually redeem thee; but it is bowed down and held captive under the dominion of the earthly wisdom; and so thy redemption (which is to be wrought out by it) sticks, and will stick, until thy heart be persuaded to join to it and become subject, without reasoning, without consulting, without disputing. For I certainly know the light manifests in thee; but the darkness puts off the present manifestation of the light, and expects another; and this is in the will of the flesh, which the Father will not answer; and *in this* will and expectation thou

wilt perish; but thy help, life, and salvation are in being subject to the present manifestation of light, parting with and departing from what thou already knowest to be of the earth, and not of God.

And in thus doing, more will be made manifest in the Lord's season, and power given to become a child, after some belief in the Father, and some entrance into the child-like nature; but the will and expectation of the flesh in thee shall never be answered:—it hath been long written in my heart concerning thee, but I dare never utter it to thee. Oh that it may be now uttered, to the melting and advantage of thy heart! for, indeed, I love thee, and have travailed for thee, and desire the salvation of thy soul, as of my own. Oh that thou mayst be led out of that wisdom which destroys, into that which saves! and mayst there, in humility of heart, receive instruction daily, according to thy need. But indeed, of a truth, thou must come into and come under that which crucifies *thy* nature and wisdom; and there (in the seasons of God's wisdom, who answers the desires of his own Spirit in the heart, but regards not the flesh) mayst thou meet with life and power, but no where else.

I am thy friend, and a dear lover of *that* in thee which desires the Lord; and oh that *that* might come up in thee, and be severed from *the earth*, that thy soul may live!

I. P.

FOR MY DEAR FRIENDS IN THE TRUTH AT LEWES.

THE God of truth plants his truth in the hearts of people, that it might grow there, and bring forth fruit to him. O my dear friends! feel it grow in every one of your hearts, and bringing forth the proper fruits of its growth to the Lord.

Mind what ariseth from the truth, what truth brings forth, and wait for and receive your nourishment from the Lord, that it may be brought forth in you. And that which

the Lord hath made barren (in you, who have experienced his righteous judgments), let it be kept so, by the same power which made it barren, that no more fruit may be brought forth to sin and unrighteousness, by any of you. Then shall ye live the life of truth, and no life but the life of truth, and dwell and walk in the truth, than which there is no greater joy, delight, or peace to be desired or enjoyed.

O my dear friends! know and every day experience Enoch's life,—a being translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son, and of walking with the Son in his kingdom; then ye will walk with the Father also, and know the heavenly paths of life, joy, righteousness, and peace in the pure light of life, which is no less than a paradise to the renewed soul.

I would fain have seen you together, had the Lord made way; but let me feel you in the hidden life, and meet you at my Father's throne, where let us beg of our God, what our souls and his whole flock stand in need of, praying for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem, unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hears our prayers; that we may daily see and feel the going on of the work of our God, in our hearts, and in the kingdoms of the world (which must become the Lord's and his Christ's), and may bless and magnify his name, who hath power over all, and orders all for good to his chosen heritage.

This is the salutation of my love to you, which lay so upon me, that I could not pass it by, who am your friend, in the everlasting, unchangeable truth of our blessed God and Saviour.

I. P.

To ——— ———

Because my not praying in my family, according to the custom of professors, seemed to be such a great stumbling-block to thee, it sprang up in my heart to render thee this account thereof.

I did formerly apply myself to pray to the Lord, morning and evening (besides other times), believing in my heart, that it was the will of the Lord I should so do. And this was my condition then:—sometimes I felt the living spring open, and the true child breathe towards the Father; at other times I felt a deadness, a dryness, a barrenness, and only a speaking and striving of the natural part, which I, even then, felt was not acceptable to the Lord, nor did profit my soul; but apprehending it to be a duty, I durst not but apply myself thereto.

Since that time,—since the Lord hath again been pleased to raise up what he had formerly begotten in me, and begun to feed it, by the pure giving forth of that breath of life which begat it (which is the bread that comes down from heaven daily to it, as the Lord pleaseth freely to dispense it),—the Lord hath shown me that prayer is his gift to the child which he begets; and that it stands not in the will, or time, or understanding, or affectionate part of the creature, but in his own begetting, which he first breathes upon, and then it breathes again towards him;—and that he worketh this at his own pleasure, and no time can be set him when he shall breathe, or when he shall not breathe; and that when he breathes, then is the time of prayer, then is the time of moving towards him, and following him who draws. So that all my times, and all my duties, and all my graces, and all my hopes, and all my refreshments, and all my ordinances, are in his hand, who is the spring of my life, and conveys, preserves, and increases life of his own good pleasure.

I freely confess, all my religion stands in waiting on the Lord, for the riches of his Spirit, and in returning back to the Lord (by his own Spirit, and in the virtue of his own life), that which he pleaseth to bestow on me. And, I have no faith, no love, no hope, no peace, no joy, no ability to any thing, no refreshment in any thing, but as I find his living breath beginning, his living breath continuing, his living breath answering, and performing what it calls for. So that I am become exceeding poor and miserable, save in

what the Lord pleaseth to be to me by his own free grace, and for his own name's sake, and in rich mercy. And if I have tasted any thing of the Lord's goodness sweeter than ordinary, my heart is willing, so far as the Lord pleaseth, faithfully to point any others to the same spring; and not discourage or witness against the least simplicity, and true desire after God, in them. But where they have lost the true living child, and another thing is got up in its stead (which, though it may bear its image to the eye of flesh, yet is not the same thing in the sight of God), and where this nourisheth itself by praying, reading, meditating, or any other such like thing, feeding the carnal part with such a kind of knowledge from Scriptures, as the natural understanding may gather and grow rich by; this, in love and faithfulness to the Lord and to souls, I cannot but testify against, wherever I find it, as the Lord draweth forth my spirit to bear its testimony.

And this I know, from the Lord, to be the general state of professors at this day. The Spirit of the Lord is departed from them, and they are joined to another spirit, as deeply and as generally as ever the Jews were; and that their prayers and reading of the Scriptures, and preaching, and duties, and ordinances are as loathsome to the soul of the Lord, as ever the Jews' incense and sacrifices were. And this is the word of the Lord concerning them. Ye must come out of your knowledge, into the feeling of an inward principle of life, if ever ye be restored to the true unity with God, and to the true enjoyment of him again. Ye must come out of the knowledge and wisdom ye have gathered from the Scriptures, into a feeling of the thing there written of, as it pleaseth the Lord to open and reveal them in the hidden man of the heart.

This is it, ye are to wait for from the Lord; and not to boast of your present state, as if ye were not backslidden from him, and had not entered into league with another spirit; which keeps up the image of what the Spirit of the

Lord once formed in you, but without the true, pure, fresh life.

From a faithful friend and lover of souls.

I. P.

To E. Terry.

Friend,

If the Lord hath extended favor to thee and shown thee mercy, I therein rejoice on thy behalf.

Thy desire, that what thou wrotest may be looked upon as nothing, and that no contest may be raised from it, I am content fully to answer thee in; nor do I desire to have any advantage against thee, nor art thou at all disparaged in my thoughts by what thou hast written, but it is in my heart as nothing, and my love flows to thee; for I take notice of thy seriousness, and what I have unity with in this letter, and overlook the other.

As touching disputes, indeed, I have no love to them: Truth did not enter my heart that way, nor do I expect to propagate it in others that way; yet, sometimes a necessity is laid upon me, for the sake of others. And truly, when I do feel a necessity, I do it in great fear; not trusting in my spear or bow, I mean in strong arguments or wise considerations, which I (of myself) can gather or comprehend; but I look up to the Lord for the guidance, help, and demonstration of his Spirit, that way may be made thereby in men's hearts for the pure seed to be reached to, wherein the true conviction, and thorough conversion of the soul to God is witnessed. I had far rather be feeling Christ's life, Spirit, and power in my own heart, than disputing with others about them.

Christians that truly fear the Lord, have a proportion of the primitive Spirit; and, if they could learn to watch and wait there, where God works the fear, they would daily receive more and more of it, and in it, understand more and more the true intent and preciousness of the words of the

Holy Scriptures. He that will truly live to God, must hear wisdom's voice within, at home, in his own heart; and he that will have her words made known, and her spirit poured out to him, must turn at her reproof. Prov. i. 23. Indeed, I never knew, and am satisfied that none else can know, the preciousness of this lesson, till they are taught it of the Lord.

There is one thing more on my heart to express, occasioned by thy last letter, which is this: I have more unity in my heart and spirit before the Lord, with the Puritan state, than with the churches and gatherings which men have built up and run into since. Indeed, men have enlarged their knowledge and comprehension of things; but that truth of heart, that love, that tenderness, that unity upon truth's account, which was then amongst them, many have made shipwreck of, and do not now know the state of their own souls, nor truth in the life and power of it. This principle of life and truth was near me, as well as others; yea, with me in that day; but I wandered from it into outward knowledge, and, with great seriousness, into a way of congregational worship, and thereby came to a great loss; and at length, for want of the Lord's presence, power, and manifestation of his love, was sick at heart. But now, the Lord, in great love and tender mercy, having brought me back to the same principle, and fixed my spirit therein, I discern the truth and beauty of that former estate, with the several runnings out from it; and find what was true or false therein, discovered to me by the holy anointing, which appears and teaches in that principle. And, friend, it is not a notion of light, which my heart is engaged to testify to; but that which enlivens, that which opens, that which gives to see, that wherein the power of life is felt. For truly, in the opening of my heart by the pure power, was I taught to see and own the principle and seed of life, and to know its way of appearance; and so can faithfully and certainly testify, that that which is divine, spiritual, and heavenly, is nearer man than he is aware, as well as that which is earthly and selfish.

O friend! if thou canst not yet see and own the principle and seed of Christ's life and Spirit, nor discern his appearance therein; yet take heed of fighting against it; for, indeed, if thou dost, thou fightest against no less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I. P.

To a near Relative.

Dear ———,

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; it is the glad tidings of freedom from sin, of putting off the body of sin by the circumcision and baptism of the Spirit, of being delivered out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, that we may serve God (without fear of them any more), in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

The ministers of the gospel are those, who, in the Spirit of Christ, by the gift and inspiration thereof, preach these tidings to the poor and needy, to the captives, to those that groan under the pressure of the body of corruption.

The gospel, through the great mercy of God, I have, at length, heard preached; and I have not heard *man*, but the voice of my Beloved; whose voice is welcome to me, though in the meanest boy, or most contemptible female. For in Christ, there is neither male nor female; nor should his Spirit, which is not limited to males, be quenched in any. And though thou, through prejudice, call this speaking of the Spirit through servants and handmaids, *prating*, yet the Lord can forgive thee; for surely, if thou knew what thou didst herein, thou wouldst not thus offend the Lord;—extolling preaching by man's wisdom, from a minister made by man, for gospel preaching, and condemning the preaching of persons sent by God, in the immediate inspiration of his Spirit. I am confident, if, without prejudice, and in the fear of God, thou didst once hear such, thou wouldst not be able to forbear saying in thy heart, It is the voice of God, of a truth. But that which hath not the sheep's ear can never own the voice of the true Shepherd.

As for those whom thou callest ministers, if I should speak, concerning them, the very truth from the mouth of of the Lord, thou couldst not, in that state wherein thou standest, receive it; yet am I far from accounting them *the offscouring of the earth;* for I look upon them as wise and knowing, and as of great beauty in the earthly learning and wisdom; but surely, not as having "the tongue of the learned," "to speak a word in season to him that is weary;" nay, they are men unlearned in this kind of learning, and such as toss and tear and wrest the scripture, in their uncertain reasonings and guessings about the sense of it, and in the various doubtful interpretations they give.

And whereas I am blamed for not putting a difference between the profane and scandalous ministers, and the reverend and godly sort; my answer is, They are united in one ministry: and the question is not concerning the persons, but the ministry; in which they are one,—their call one, their maintenance one, their way of worship and preaching one, their standing and power of government one; which is not by the power and presence of the Spirit, but by the strength of the magistrate. But the true gospel and ministry is spiritual, and cannot stand nor be upheld by that which is carnal, neither in its call, maintenance, government, or what else belongs to it. When Christ came in the flesh, the words he pronounced were not so much against the profane and scandalous among the Scribes and Pharisees; but against those that appeared most strict, and were accounted among the Jews the most reverend and godly. And, were it not for the appearance of godliness in these men, the persecution of the present times had not been so hot, the good old cause so lost, and the work of reformation (inasmuch as relates to men) so overturned as at this day. O ——! there was once a good thing in divers of them, which my soul would rejoice to see revived; but as the seat of government eat out the good that was in the bishops, so gaping after the seat of government hath sunk the good thing in others also; and made their eye so dim,

that they cannot see the mighty breakings forth of the Spirit of Christ in his people.

I. P.

To Richard Roberts.

R. R.

Thou didst acquaint me that Timothy Fly, the Anabaptist teacher, did charge me with denying Christ's humanity, and also the blood of Christ, which was shed at Golgotha, without the gates of Jerusalem; and that I own no other Christ but what is within men.

Sure I am, that neither T. Fly, nor any other man, did ever hear me deny, that Christ, according to the flesh, was born of the Virgin Mary, or that that was his blood, which was shed without the gates of Jerusalem. And the Lord, who knoweth my heart, knoweth, that such a thing never was in my heart; nay, I do greatly value that flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and witness forgiveness of sins and redemption through it. Yet, if I should say, I do not know nor partake of his flesh and blood in the mystery also, I should not be a faithful witness to the Lord. For there is the mystery of God and of Christ; and that is the soul's food which gives life to the soul, even the living bread and the living water. For there is living bread and living water; and the flesh and blood in the mystery, on which the soul feeds, is not inferior in nature and virtue to the bread and water. There is a knowing Christ after the flesh, and there is a knowing him after the Spirit, and a feeding on his Spirit and life; and this doth not destroy his appearing in flesh, or the blessed ends thereof, but confirm and fulfil them.

The owning of Christ being inwardly in his saints, doth not deny his appearing outwardly in the body prepared; unless T. F. can maintain this, that the same Christ that appeared outwardly cannot appear inwardly. "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," &c. Rom. viii. 10. "Christ

in you, the hope of glory." Col. i. 27. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him." Rev. iii. 20. "I will come again," saith Christ: Ye are now in pain, as a woman in travail, full of sorrow for the loss of my outward, bodily presence; but I will come to you again in spirit; see John xvi. and John xiv. 17. "He," that "dwelleth with you, shall be in you:" and then, when the Bridegroom is inwardly and spiritually in you and with you, "your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John xvi. 22. And so, the apostles and primitive Christians did "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Peter i. 8. because of the spiritual appearance and presence of the Bridegroom. And yet, there is no other bridegroom, who now appears in spirit, or spiritually in the hearts of his, than He that once appeared in the prepared body, and did the Father's will therein.

I. P.

Addressed to the Independents at Canterbury.

I have been a seeker after God, and a worshipper of him from my childhood, according to the best of my understanding; and, at last, sat down in that way which is called Independency, believing it to be the way of the gospel, and entering into it with much fear and seeking of God. In which way, the Lord had regard to the uprightness and tenderness of heart, which he had formed in me.

But, at length, the Lord's hand fell upon me, breaking me all to pieces therein, as to my inward state; for what cause, I had then no knowledge at all of; but mourned before him unutterably, night and day, and lay panting and languishing after him, who was the only Beloved of my soul. Many pitied me, but none could reach my state, but, after much serious discourse with me, greatly wondered: and some said, it was a prerogative case, and would, questionless, end in good-will and mercy from the Lord to me. I parted from that people in great love and tenderness;

they expecting my return to them again (the love between me and them being so exceeding great, and I having let in no prejudice against them), and I knowing nothing to the contrary.

But it pleased the Lord, after many years, when my hope nearly failed, to visit me in a wonderful manner, breaking my heart in pieces, giving me to feel his pure, living power, and the raising of his holy seed in my heart thereby; insomuch, that I cried out inwardly before him, "This is He, this is He whom I have sought after, and so much wanted! this is the pearl, this is the holy leaven! do what thou wilt with me, afflict me how thou wilt, and as long as thou pleasest, so that at length I may be joined with this, and become one with this!" So the eye of my understanding was from that day anointed, and I saw and felt the pure life of the Son made manifest in me; and the Father drew me to him, as to a living stone, and hath built my soul upon him, and brought me to Mount Zion, and the holy city of our God; where the river of life sends forth its streams, which refresh and make glad the holy city, and all the tabernacles that are built on God's holy hill. And indeed, from this holy hill and city, the law and word of life doth issue, and the inhabitants of the rock of life hear it, and are friends to the Bridegroom, and glad of the Bridegroom's voice, and follow the Lamb, the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, whithersoever he leads; who leads them into the pastures of life, and folds of pure rest, and gives them eternal life to feed on, and his peace and patience to possess their souls in.

O ye Independents! whom I have loved above all people, and never had thoughts of rending from you, but was forcibly taken by the hand of the Lord out of your Society; yet not without a desire to return to you again, if the Lord pleased to make any way thereto;—I say, O ye Independents, above all professions the one most dearly beloved by me! oh that ye could hear the sensible, experienced testimony that is on my heart to you concerning my Beloved, concerning his appearance, concerning his church, concern-

ing his way, his truth, his kingdom. It is nigher than ye are aware, and above all that ye can comprehend concerning it. Oh that ye might inwardly know these things! Turn in, turn in: mind what stirs in your hearts; what moves against sin, what moves towards sin. The one is the Son's life, the Son's grace, the Son's Spirit; the other is the spirit and nature which is contrary thereto. If ye could but come to the sense of this, and come to a true, inward silence, and waiting, and turning at the reproofs of heavenly wisdom, and know the heavenly drawings into that which is holy and living; ye would soon find the Lord working in your hearts, to stop the issues of death, and to open the issues of life there; and ye would find yourselves anointed daily by the Lord (for there is not a day but we need to see, nor a day but the Lord gives sight), and an understanding also would be given you to know Him that is true, and the "eternal life," 1 John i. 2. and an abiding in him that is true. And, abiding here, ye cannot fail of receiving power (from him who ministers according to the power of the endless life), not only to overcome sin and your souls' enemies, but to become sons to God, with delight performing his will. And that yoke, which yokes down and subdues sin in you, will be easy, yea, the ease, pleasure, and joy of your souls.

The Lord open an ear in you to hear as the learned, that ye may become experiencers and possessors of these things; for, of a truth, the Lord is arisen to shake terribly the earth, and to build up his Zion, and to give unto his people "a peaceable habitation and sure dwellings and quiet resting-places" upon Mount Zion. Isa. xxxii. 18.

I. P.

To Francis Pordage.

Friend,

There is a mind, which can never know nor receive the things of God's kingdom; and yet, this mind is very busy in searching and inquiring after them.

The Scribes and Pharisees were still questioning Christ, and desiring satisfaction about the kingdom, and about his doctrine and miracles, and the practice of his disciples, but could never receive satisfaction; yet, the disciples themselves were many times afraid to ask Christ questions, there being a dread of God upon their spirits, and a limit to the knowing and inquiring part in them; for indeed, the true birth learns under the yoke.

This, therefore, is precious; to come to feel somewhat to limit that mind, which is forward and inquisitive out of the true nature and sense, and to receive the yoke, and to be limited by it and famished; for famine, not food of life, is appointed for that mind and birth. It is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Now, this is precious and greatly needful: for a man to know, and discern, and watch against that wisdom and understanding in himself, which God will destroy and bring to nothing; for, to be sure, while he is learning and striving to know with that, God will never teach him, but rather hide the mystery of life and salvation from him. And what is all man's knowledge worth, that he learns of himself without God's teaching; and which he receives into that understanding which is to perish and be destroyed? In the new understanding, God sets up the true light; but in the other understanding, are false lights set up, which do not give a true distinction of good and evil, but they call good evil, and evil good, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and cannot do otherwise; because, the light in them is darkness, it not being the gift of grace whereby they see and judge, but a light of their own forming, according to their own comprehension of things, in the dark and fallen understanding.

Now, the Lord hath taught us the difference between all these lights, and the light of his grace, which purely teacheth, livingly teacheth, not in the reasonings of the mind, but in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in the soul and conscience. When we came to see in this light, we found, that which we had called good, according

to our former apprehension of things, was not so in the true balance; and what we thought had pleased God, was abominable in his eyes. And truly, all that are not come to this light, they offer that which is abominable to God, and yet think it pleaseth him; and what a gross and dangerous mistake is this! indeed, all are no better than will-deeds, which are done out of the light, life, virtue, and power of God's Spirit. For the root must be good, or the fruit cannot be good. The mind must be renewed, or the knowledge is but old, dead, literal, and fleshly; such as the fleshly understanding comprehends and receives, which can neither know nor receive what is spiritual.

Truly, the Lord hath led us a great way in our journey, and done great things inwardly for and in our spirits; yet, if we were not kept under the yoke, but that part in us had liberty to know, and live, and act, and worship, we should yet perish, and be cut off from the land of the living.

I. P.

In reply to an answer of I. H. to somewhat written on behalf of truth.

——— Indeed, to speak properly, the church of the gospel, or new-testament church, is invisible. The persons in whom the church is, are visible; yet the new testament church is not a society of men, but rather of the invisible life in men. It is a fellowship in the faith, in the Spirit, which is the bond of their unity and of their peace.

The life is breathed invisibly into the hidden man; John iii. 8. it is there nourished and built up invisibly into a spiritual, invisible temple, house, or church; and in *that* is the unity and fellowship. So that the church is a mystery, and the fellowship a mystery, which is hid from every eye but the eye of life; and there is no having fellowship one with another, but by coming to that, and keeping in that, wherein is the fellowship. 1 John i. 7. It is of inward Jews the church is built; it is of such, God seeks to frame his new house of worship, under the gospel. John iv. 23.

Now, of such stones as these, the Lord builds up a temple for his Spirit to dwell in, a house for his life and presence to manifest itself in,—even a church for the living God. This building is by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and of that which is spiritual; this building is one with the foundation, and therefore is the pillar and ground of Truth, which none is but Christ, and that which is married to him, and so one with him. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Consider the place well, and see whether it relate to that which thou callest the *invisible*, or to that which thou callest the *visible church*.

It is the candlestick in persons, that is the church; not any outward meeting of persons, or joining together by covenant, or receiving or practising of ordinances, can make a church; but the eternal life in believers, formed by the Spirit into a candlestick, to hold the eternal lamp or light, with the everlasting oil of salvation. The light thus shining in this candlestick, continually refreshed by this oil,—here is a flourishing temple, wherever it is found; here is the church of the living God, here is the spouse married to the Lamb, her Husband. But grieve the Spirit, quench the Spirit, despise the prophesyings thereof, and light up a candle of the fleshly wisdom and knowledge of the things of God, instead of these, the oil soon fails; the oil failing, the lamp goes out; the lamp, or light, being gone out of the candlestick, the Lord soon removes the candlestick; and the candlestick being once removed, the very same persons may meet together often, and hold up the form,—performing things mentioned in the Scriptures concerning a church, and observing such things as they may call the institutions and ordinances thereof,—but they are far from continuing to be a church. Take away the faith, what is left of a Christian? and take away the candlestick, what is left of a church?

It is the Spirit alone that can square stones, and fit them for building a church of; and he alone can build them up into a house, when he hath squared them. Eph. ii. 22. And after he hath built, he can pull down again, and bring into a wilderness state; for there is a wilderness state of Chris-

tianity as well as a built state; Rev. xii. 6. and as, in the built state, it is dangerous to be out of the church, so, in the wilderness state, it is dangerous remaining in that building which the Spirit of the Lord hath forsaken. Now, if the Spirit be the builder, then, surely, he will take in no stones, but such as he hath first squared and fitted for the building. And after the church is built, it is he alone who addeth to the church; who will be sure to add none, but those whom he hath first converted. Acts ii. 47.

The church is a body gathered in the Spirit, and watching to the Spirit; who is present there with his pure, searching, discerning eyes; so that nothing that is impure can enter (they watching to the Spirit, according to the order of the gospel), no, not one counterfeit Jew, no, nor so much as one false apostle, though they clothe themselves ever so like angels of light. Rev. xxii. But if they be negligent, and from off the watch, not waiting for the guidance of the Spirit; then that which is corrupt may creep in, and endanger the body. Jude 4.

To Bridget Atley.

Dear Friend,

I am sensible of thy sore travail and deep distress, and how hard it is for thee to meet with that which is comfortable and refreshing, and how easily again it is lost; and whence it ariseth,—even from the working of the enemy in a mystery of deceit in thy heart; wherein thou dost not perceive nor suspect him, but swallowest down his baits, and so he smites thee with his hook, and thereby draws thee back into the region of darkness; and then, entereth that part in thee which is in nature one with him, filling it with his wickedness; and then, laying loads of accusations upon thee, as if they were true. These are not strange things to the travellers after the Lord, but such as are usually met with in the like cases: but if thy eye were made single and opened by the Lord, thou wouldst see those baits, and turn

from that, which thou now so readily swallowest down; and so avoid the stroke, and keep thy station, in the light and mercy of the Lord. Thou must not look so much at the evil that is nigh, but rather at that which stands ready to pity and help,—and which hath pitied and helped thy distressed soul, and will pity and help it again. Why is there a mercy-seat, but for the sinner to look towards in time of need?

Neither must thou hearken to the questionings of the insnaring questioner: but cleave to that which shuts them out, keeping to the sense of the love and mercy, when the Lord is kind and tender to thee. When the enemy entered thy habitation again, and broke thy rest, peace, and enjoyment of the Lord; again, an earnest desire after cleansing arose in thee; not from the life, but in the evil; this was also a means to rob thee of that, which, in its abiding and powerful operation cleanseth the heart; and here, thou wouldst be limiting the Lord in his dealings, who worketh according to the counsel of his own will, and visiteth when and where he pleaseth. And thus the enemy having caught thee with his mysterious workings, he then draws thee into the pit of darkness, where the remembrance of life, and the sense of mercy and love vanisheth; and there is no help for thee, by any thing thou canst do or think. But be patient, till the Lord's tender mercy and love visit thee again; and then, look up to him against this and such like snares, which would come between thee and the appearance of the Lord's love; that thou mayst feel more of his abidings with thee, and of the sweet effects thereof. For, these things are not to destroy thee, but to teach thee wisdom; which the Lord is able, through many exercises and sore trials, to bestow upon thee; which my soul will exceedingly rejoice to hear the tidings of; that thy heart may be rid of all that burdeneth, and filled with all it rightly desires after, in the proper season and goodness of the Lord; to whose wise ordering and tender mercy I commit thee, remaining

Thy faithful friend,

I. P.

To Abraham Grimsden.

Friend,

Thou hast made some profession of truth, and at times come amongst us; but whether thou hast been changed thereby, and been faithful to the Lord in what has been made manifest to thee, belongs unto thee diligently to inquire. There is no safe dallying with truth. He that puts his hand to the plow, must not look back at any thing of this world; but take up the cross and follow Christ, in the single-hearted obedience, hating father, mother, goods, lands, wife, yea, all for His sake; or he is not worthy of Him. The good hand of the Lord is with his people, and he blesseth them both inwardly and outwardly; and they that seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, in the first place, have other things also added: but they that neglect the kingdom, and are unfaithful to truth, seeking the world before it, the hand of the Lord goes forth against them, and they many times, miss of that also of the world, which they seek and labor for.

Truth is honorable. Oh! take heed of bringing a reproach upon it, by pretending to it, and yet not being of it, in the pure sense and obedience, which it begets and brings forth in the hearts and lives of the faithful. But if any be careless and unfaithful to what they are convinced of, and so, for the present, bring a reproach upon God's truth, which is altogether innocent thereof; the Lord, in his due time, will wipe off that reproach from his truth and people; but the sorrow and burden will light upon themselves, which will be very bitter and heavy to them, in the day that the Lord shall visit them with his righteous judgments.

Oh, consider rightly and truly! It had been better for thee, thou hadst never known truth, nor been directed to the principle and path of righteousness; than, after direction thereto, to turn from the holy commandments, and deny obedience to the righteous One. The Lord give thee true sense and repentance, if it be his holy pleasure, and

raise thee out of this world's spirit, to live to him in his own pure Spirit. It is easy to profess and make a show of truth, but hard to come into it. It is very hard to the earthly mind, to part with that which must be parted with for it, before the soul can come to possess and enjoy it. Profession of truth, without the life and power, is but a slippery place, which men may easily slide from; nay, indeed, if men be not in the life and power, they can hardly be kept from that which will stain their profession. The Lord, who searcheth the heart, knows how it is with thee: oh, consider thy ways, and fear before him, and take heed of taking his name in vain, for he will not hold such guiltless!

I am, in this, faithful and friendly to thy soul, desiring its eternal welfare, and that it may not for ever perish from the presence and power of the Lord.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

God breathed into man the breath of life, and man thereby became a living soul to God, to whom by transgression he died. But Christ (who was before Abraham, and, in due time, took up that body prepared by the Father) is the resurrection and the life, who, from the Father, breathes life into man again, and so he comes to live again. And man, being quickened by Christ, is to rise up from the dead, and travel with Christ into the land of the living. And Christ is all to the believers, in whom dwells all fulness; the circumcision is in him, the baptism in him, and the righteousness, rest, and peace also; yea, in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and he is made of God, unto them that believe in him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now, it is very precious to feel this; but of little value to imagine or comprehend apprehensions about this. For the end of words is to bring men to the thing; but the Scribes and Pharisees, by their apprehen-

sions upon the words given forth by the Spirit, missed of the thing (though they thought they missed not, but were blessed in the knowledge of the law, and they that knew not the law were cursed): and the same spirit is alive in many that profess truth now, who, by their understanding of scripture words, are kept from the thing which the Scriptures testify of. What did Christ come in the flesh and suffer for, but to unite and reconcile to God? and what is the antichristian way of erring from the truth, but to cry up the appearance of Christ in the flesh, his sufferings, resurrection, ascension, &c., in that spirit, wherein the true union and reconciliation is not witnessed? If we receive the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we a share in his Son's death and atonement, and his blood cleanseth from unrighteousness; but not otherwise.

Oh that all who truly desire salvation, might know the way hither, and receive that from God, which cleanseth and keepeth clean! Amen.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

The Lord God on whom I wait, and whom I worship in spirit and truth, and whom it is my delight to serve and obey, hath divers times engaged my mind to write to thee in true and tender love. There is somewhat, also, on my heart at this time to thee, concerning the state of the gospel in general, and in particular concerning the state and condition of those, who truly know and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of saints.

The state of the gospel in general, is a state of redemption and deliverance from the soul's enemies; of which redemption every soul partakes, according to its faith in and obedience to the Truth, and according to its growth in him who is true. The babes in Christ and little children, their sins are forgiven them for his name's sake. The young

men have fought valiantly, and have overcome the wicked one. The old men, or elders in the truth, they are experienced in the heavenly wisdom and knowledge of Him who is from the beginning.

Now, there are some things which belong to all in general, or which are common to all, and somewhat which is peculiar to each member in particular. These things, which belong to all in general, are very many; but it is only on my heart to mention to thee at this time those few which the apostle recites together in Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6, which indeed comprehend much; and he that knoweth and partaketh of them, hath also a share in, and benefit by, all the rest. First, he saith, "There is one body." There is one head; and this one head hath one body, of which all that are truly living are members. Secondly, "There is one Spirit," which quickens, keeps alive, and gives nourishment to, ordereth, comforteth, defendeth this one body. Thirdly, "There is one hope of" their "calling;" for they are all called from the land of darkness, and out of the shadow and dominion of death, to travel towards an inheritance of light, and life everlasting. Fourthly, There is "one Lord," who hath power over, and the rule and dominion of, this one body; to whom they are all to give an account daily of what they do, and at the last day, of what hath been done in their body of flesh. Fifthly, There is "one faith," wherewith they all believe in, and draw virtue from, the head; which faith is the gift of God, and springs from the root of life in his Son, and is of another nature than that natural ability of believing, which is found in mankind. Sixthly, There is "one baptism," by the one Spirit; whereby all the true members are baptized into the one living body, and come to partake of the virtue, benefits, and privileges thereof. Lastly, There is "one God and Father of all," who begat them all, and is to be worshipped by them all, as their Lord and God; he being witnessed and experienced by them to be "above all, and through all, and in" them "all." This is the state in general, the gospel state, into which Christ gives his sheep—his Father's children—en-

trance; and it is a blessed thing to know and experience this state, that is, to have a real interest in, and really to partake of, these things.

The state of every one in particular is thus:— "Unto every one" in particular "is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ; for the fulness is his, yea, he is the fulness; and of his fulness doth he give a measure to each member in particular. Not to all a like proportion, but to every one some; as he pleaseth to distribute and proportion out the gift of his grace to them. For it is his own, and he may dispense his gifts and heavenly talents as he pleaseth; and according to the state of each in the body, and according to their work and service, so doth he proportion out his gift of grace to them. Now, this is that which every one is to mind; even the grace given to them, their own gift from Christ, to grow in that, and to be what they are in that. He that hath none of this grace, he is none of Christ's; and he that hath received the grace, the free gift, he is to keep to the measure of it, in all he is and does.

Now, shall I say to thee, feel my love in these lines? or shall I not rather say, feel the love of my God, who visits thee yet again, and would not have thee perish, in resisting his Holy Spirit, and slighting the grace and truth which is by Jesus Christ, which is now powerfully revealed in many hearts? Blessed be he who hath visited his people with the horn of salvation.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

O Dear Friend!

The eternal love of my Father is to thee; and, because he loves thee, and would entirely enjoy thee, therefore doth he so grievously batter and break down that which stands in the way. What he is doing towards thee, thou canst not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Only be still, and wait for the springing up of hope, in the seasons the Father sees necessary; that thou mayst not faint under his

hand, but be supported by his secret power, until his work be finished. The great thing necessary for thee at present to know is the drawings of his Spirit; that thou mayst not ignorantly withstand or neglect them, and protract the day of thy redemption.

Oh! look not after great things: small breathings, small desires, after the Lord, if true and pure, are sweet beginnings of life. Take heed of despising "the day of small things," by looking after some great visitation, proportionable to thy distress, according to thy eye. Nay, thou must become a child, thou must lose thy own will quite by degrees. Thou must wait for life to be measured out by the Father, and be content with what proportion, and at what time, he shall please to measure.

Oh! be little, be little; and then thou wilt be content with little: and if thou feel, now and then, a check or a secret smiting,—in *that* is the Father's love; be not over-wise nor over-eager, in thy own willing, running, and desiring, and thou mayst feel it so; and by degrees come to the knowledge of thy Guide, who will lead thee, step by step, in the path of life, and teach thee to follow, and, in his own season, powerfully judge that which cannot nor will not follow. Be still, and wait for light and strength; and desire not to know or comprehend, but to be known and comprehended in the love and life, which seeks out, gathers, and preserves the lost sheep.

I remain thy dear friend, and a well-wisher to thy soul, in the love of my Father.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

Dear Friend,

I received thy letter kindly, and in the tenderness of love, which desires thy enjoyment of the Lord in this world, and the eternal welfare of thy soul with him for ever.

It is a great matter, to have the mind rightly guided to

that wherein God appears, that the soul may wait at the posts of wisdom, to hear wisdom's voice; and he that hears and observes wisdom's voice, what saith wisdom concerning such an one? "I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Prov. i. 23.

Thou hast read in the Scriptures, of the kingdom of God, which Christ told the Pharisees was within them. He also, in parables, expressed what it was like; even like a grain of mustard seed, like a pearl of great price, like a lost groat, or piece of silver, like a treasure hid in a field, like leaven, &c. Now, oh that thou mightst come to the discerning of this. Is there any such thing in thee? Surely, there is. Dost thou know it? art thou in union with it? is it grown and enlarged in thee? is there room made for it, and doth it overspread thy heart? Oh that it were thus with thee!

Whereas thou sayest, The covenant, the new covenant, is contained in the Scriptures; that expression of thine is not clear, and to the nature of the thing. There are, indeed, descriptions of the covenant in the Scriptures; but the covenant itself is an agreement of life and peace, made with the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ, upon his believing in His power, and obeying His voice; according to that scripture, "Hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. lv. 3. Now, this is it the soul is to wait for; even to feel the power of life breaking the bonds of death, and opening the ear to the voice of God's Spirit, that it may receive the impressions thereof, and feel the new creation inwardly, the new heart, the new mind, the new law of life, written within by the finger of God's Spirit, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And then this law is the rule inwardly, as the outward law was the rule to the outward Jews.

Thou thinkest me somewhat too sharp and severe, in my sentence concerning the ministers [of the day]. I do not remember that passage. I have received great mercy, and I would not be sharp or severe towards any. If, therefore,

any such thing was, be assured it was in faithfulness to the Lord. All sorts of Christians own Christ in words, but all do not distinguish, discern, [nor are] subject to, the appearances of his Spirit and power; but resist, gainsay, and oppose, through error and mistake at first, till at length they come to hardness. These are the builders who refuse the Corner-stone. The builders rejected Christ's appearance in flesh, in the days of his flesh; and the builders again refuse his appearance in Spirit, in this day of his Spirit. Oh that any who are tender among them might be sensible of it! that they might not draw down God's severity and sharpness upon their heads; which if they do, it is not our joy, but matter of grief to us. And, friend, the state of profession is not what it was, when thou and I were acquainted; but a withered state in comparison of that. I can truly say, concerning many professors, Oh that I could find them to be now, what they were twenty years ago! They have got more head-knowledge; but that savor of life which then was in them is not now to be found among them. Truly, I speak not otherwise concerning them, but as I feel the Spirit of the Lord testifying in me; neither would I have mentioned this at this time, but for thy sake. Whatever is of God in any, my heart cannot but own: but many take that to be of God (that fear, that faith, that love, those prayers, those hopes, that peace, that joy, &c.), which is not of him. Oh, how precious is that which truly and rightly distinguisheth! "My sheep hear my voice." The voice of the Shepherd distinguisheth every deceit and every deceiver.

But whereas thou sayest, The spirits are to be tried by the Scriptures; I have found it otherwise in my experience. The Scriptures may try words; but nothing can try spirits, but the Spirit. "I will know," said the apostle, "not the words of them that are puffed up, but the power." Deceivers may come with scripture words, but they cannot come with the true power. Therefore, the Apostle John, who bade the believers try the spirits, told them, they had an unction from the Holy One, and pointed them to the anointing. 1 John ii. 20. 27. But who can judge of this, but he

that hath the anointing, and is taught of the Lord to try things by it? he knows how it tries, and what a certain judgment it gives concerning the nature of things, and concerning every voice and every appearance. The Spirit of God searcheth all things, discerns all things, discovers all things,—every snare, every device of the enemy, the net spread ever so secretly; blessed are they, whose eyes are opened and kept open by him.

There was a time of great darkness befell me, wherein all that I had known and formerly experienced was hid from me; and I cried out, "I know not the Lord; and yet I cannot live without him. Oh! what shall I do?" &c. But I never denied Christ to be the way of salvation, in my deepest darkness and distress. And now at length,—blessed be the Lord!—I have lived to see the day, wherein he is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to me; and I feel his blood sprinkled and overflowing, which makes whiter than snow; and find him to be the mercy-seat, through whom I have access to God; and live by mercy and the deep compassions of God towards me, which, because they fail not, but are daily renewed upon me, therefore is my soul preserved in life before my God.

Oh, wait to know that wherein the Lord inwardly appears! and take up the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to every thing that is contrary to God; that it all may be crucified in thee, that thy soul may live in the abundance of life and peace. God is not straitened to any of the children; oh that none of them may be straitened in their own bowels! And be not discouraged because of any weakness, or because of thy age. What knowest thou, what the Lord will do for thee? Thy weakness is not thy disadvantage, but thy advantage; for the weaker thou art in thyself, the fitter art thou to have Christ's power revealed and manifested in thee. Only wait to know that wherein God appears in thy heart, even the holy seed, the immortal seed of life; that that may be discerned, distinguished, and have scope in thee; that it may spring up in thy heart, and live in thee, and gather thee into itself, and leaven thee all over

with its nature; that thou mayst be a new lump, and mayst walk before God, not in the oldness of thy own literal knowledge or apprehensions of things, but in the newness of his Spirit.

The Lord appear to thee, in the light and demonstration of his Spirit in thy heart and conscience, touch thee, quicken thee, lead thee, guide and make thee sensible of every appearance of his; that no motion or drawing of his Spirit may be quenched in thee, nor any motion of the contrary spirit, under any deceivableness, hearkened to; that thou mayst travel faithfully, and come to the end of thy travels with joy and full peace, reaping the sheaves in life everlasting, of all that thou hast sown to the Spirit.

This is the earnest and single desire of my soul for thee, who am thy true and faithful friend, and a hearty well-wisher to thee and thine.

I. P.

To Ruth Palmer.

My Dear Friend,

Whose love I am sensible of, and whom I entirely wish well unto, and desire for thee, that thou mayst purchase and possess the pearl of price; and so know and enjoy Christ Jesus, the Lord, as that thou mayst witness him to be eternal life to thy soul.

I received a letter from thee, which occasions this my writing to thee. It is precious, indeed, to have the Spirit of God witness to us, that our sins are pardoned. And they who are truly pardoned, to whom the Spirit so witnesseth, receive the Spirit; indeed, all that are Christians receive the Spirit; for he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of His. And where the Spirit is, there is He who hath power over sin, who delights to exercise his power in mortifying and subduing sin, and in reigning and triumphing over it. Now, they that have received the Spirit, are to live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; and doing so, they

cannot fulfil the lusts of the flesh, nor love the world, nor the things of the world, nor fashion themselves according to it; but are redeemed out of it, in heart, spirit, life, and conversation, up to God. O my friend! let no religion satisfy thee, but that which brings thee hither, and which brings forth this fruit in thee. We must needs own Christ to be the spring, and that we can do nothing without him, but only by, and in, and through him; because we daily experience it to be so.

As touching election, we do believe it, according as the Lord hath taught us, and as the Scriptures express it: but such an election as shuts out any from the salvation God hath prepared for the sons of men, we cannot own; because the Scriptures expressly testify that God "would have *all* to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth." Yea, also, we know it to be his nature. It is the nature of the destroyer to destroy,—he would have none saved; but it is the nature of God, the Saviour, to save,—he would have none perish. But, as there is a making the calling and election sure, so there is first a coming into the calling, and into the election. Now, the election cannot perish, nay, the elect seed cannot be deceived. And, as we are chosen in him, and come into him (out of darkness into his marvellous light, out of death into his life), so we must abide in him: and the promise is to him that continues unto the end. And Christ said to the church of Ephesus, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else," &c.: and mind, what a state they fell from, and how far they were fallen, when so severely threatened. It was not wholly; it was but from the first love and first works; and yet, if they repented not, how great was their danger.

As for that place of Rom. xi., it is manifest that there is an election, and that this election is not of works, but of grace. Yet, there must be a hearing of the voice; "To-day," said the apostle, "if ye will hear his voice;" and so, there must be a coming to Christ, and an abiding in him, and a walking in the strait way; for it is the way God

chooseth. God hath chosen Christ, and the soul in him; and the message is to invite to come to him, and abide in him to the end. And the condemnation is upon rejecting him, and the salvation, to them that receive him,—which is not of man's self neither, but men are made willing so to do, in the day of God's power: and the power is not far from, or wanting to any, in the way that the Lord hath appointed; though there are also the *aboundings* of love, mercy, and power according to his pleasure. The falling away is, not because persons were not elected, but because they let in that which is contrary to the election, and cleave to it. So there is a "heart of unbelief," in which men depart from the living God, and make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience; and the ground of their falling is, their hearkening not to the Lord, but to the voice and temptations of the enemy. There are called, and faithful, and chosen. These are states, to be come into and abode in. Many may be called, who never come to be faithful, nor chosen. To witness the peculiar choice of God, this is precious:—and then, not to be content with a touch of the calling, or a touch of the election, but to "make" them "sure." There is no choosing, but in the seed. Make sure of that seed, and thou makest both thy "calling and election sure." For indeed, "many are called, but few chosen." And yet, when a man comes thus far, so as to know himself chosen, is he quite out of danger? Did not Paul know his election sure? yet, was he not afterwards careful to keep that under and in subjection, which was to be kept under and in subjection? "lest," saith he, "when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

Thou sayest, Whom God once loves, he loves to the end. Did he not once love all men, even the whole world? Did he not manifest it, in sending his Son for them? And they that come into his Son, they come into his love; and they that come into his love, must continue in his love and in his goodness. For, it is not *persons* ("God is no respecter of persons"), but the seed, God loves. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" and, in that seed, they

To Abraham Grimsden.

Friend,

Thou hast made some profession of truth, and at times come amongst us; but whether thou hast been changed thereby, and been faithful to the Lord in what has been made manifest to thee, belongs unto thee diligently to inquire. There is no safe dallying with truth. He that puts his hand to the plow, must not look back at any thing of this world; but take up the cross and follow Christ, in the single-hearted obedience, hating father, mother, goods, lands, wife, yea, all for His sake; or he is not worthy of Him. The good hand of the Lord is with his people, and he blesseth them both inwardly and outwardly; and they that seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, in the first place, have other things also added: but they that neglect the kingdom, and are unfaithful to truth, seeking the world before it, the hand of the Lord goes forth against them, and they many times, miss of that also of the world, which they seek and labor for.

Truth is honorable. Oh! take heed of bringing a reproach upon it, by pretending to it, and yet not being of it, in the pure sense and obedience, which it begets and brings forth in the hearts and lives of the faithful. But if any be careless and unfaithful to what they are convinced of, and so, for the present, bring a reproach upon God's truth, which is altogether innocent thereof; the Lord, in his due time, will wipe off that reproach from his truth and people; but the sorrow and burden will light upon themselves, which will be very bitter and heavy to them, in the day that the Lord shall visit them with his righteous judgments.

Oh, consider rightly and truly! It had been better for thee, thou hadst never known truth, nor been directed to the principle and path of righteousness; than, after direction thereto, to turn from the holy commandments, and deny obedience to the righteous One. The Lord give thee true sense and repentance, if it be his holy pleasure, and

raise thee out of this world's spirit, to live to him in his own pure Spirit. It is easy to profess and make a show of truth, but hard to come into it. It is very hard to the earthly mind, to part with that which must be parted with for it, before the soul can come to possess and enjoy it. Profession of truth, without the life and power, is but a slippery place, which men may easily slide from; nay, indeed, if men be not in the life and power, they can hardly be kept from that which will stain their profession. The Lord, who searcheth the heart, knows how it is with thee: oh, consider thy ways, and fear before him, and take heed of taking his name in vain, for he will not hold such guiltless!

I am, in this, faithful and friendly to thy soul, desiring its eternal welfare, and that it may not for ever perish from the presence and power of the Lord.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

God breathed into man the breath of life, and man thereby became a living soul to God, to whom by transgression he died. But Christ (who was before Abraham, and, in due time, took up that body prepared by the Father) is the resurrection and the life, who, from the Father, breathes life into man again, and so he comes to live again. And man, being quickened by Christ, is to rise up from the dead, and travel with Christ into the land of the living. And Christ is all to the believers, in whom dwells all fulness; the circumcision is in him, the baptism in him, and the righteousness, rest, and peace also; yea, in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and he is made of God, unto them that believe in him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now, it is very precious to feel this; but of little value to imagine or comprehend apprehensions about this. For the end of words is to bring men to the thing; but the Scribes and Pharisees, by their apprehen-

sions upon the words given forth by the Spirit, missed of the thing (though they thought they missed not, but were blessed in the knowledge of the law, and they that knew not the law were cursed): and the same spirit is alive in many that profess truth now, who, by their understanding of scripture words, are kept from the thing which the Scriptures testify of. What did Christ come in the flesh and suffer for, but to unite and reconcile to God? and what is the antichristian way of erring from the truth, but to cry up the appearance of Christ in the flesh, his sufferings, resurrection, ascension, &c., in that spirit, wherein the true union and reconciliation is not witnessed? If we receive the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we a share in his Son's death and atonement, and his blood cleanseth from unrighteousness; but not otherwise.

Oh that all who truly desire salvation, might know the way hither, and receive that from God, which cleanseth and keepeth clean! Amen.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

The Lord God on whom I wait, and whom I worship in spirit and truth, and whom it is my delight to serve and obey, hath divers times engaged my mind to write to thee in true and tender love. There is somewhat, also, on my heart at this time to thee, concerning the state of the gospel in general, and in particular concerning the state and condition of those, who truly know and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of saints.

The state of the gospel in general, is a state of redemption and deliverance from the soul's enemies; of which redemption every soul partakes, according to its faith in and obedience to the Truth, and according to its growth in him who is true. The babes in Christ and little children, their sins are forgiven them for his name's sake. The young

men have fought valiantly, and have overcome the wicked one. The old men, or elders in the truth, they are experienced in the heavenly wisdom and knowledge of Him who is from the beginning.

Now, there are some things which belong to all in general, or which are common to all, and somewhat which is peculiar to each member in particular. These things, which belong to all in general, are very many; but it is only on my heart to mention to thee at this time those few which the apostle recites together in Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6, which indeed comprehend much; and he that knoweth and partaketh of them, hath also a share in, and benefit by, all the rest. First, he saith, "There is one body." There is one head; and this one head hath one body, of which all that are truly living are members. Secondly, "There is one Spirit," which quickens, keeps alive, and gives nourishment to, ordereth, comforteth, defendeth this one body. Thirdly, "There is one hope of" their "calling;" for they are all called from the land of darkness, and out of the shadow and dominion of death, to travel towards an inheritance of light, and life everlasting. Fourthly, There is "one Lord," who hath power over, and the rule and dominion of, this one body; to whom they are all to give an account daily of what they do, and at the last day, of what hath been done in their body of flesh. Fifthly, There is "one faith," wherewith they all believe in, and draw virtue from, the head; which faith is the gift of God, and springs from the root of life in his Son, and is of another nature than that natural ability of believing, which is found in mankind. Sixthly, There is "one baptism," by the one Spirit; whereby all the true members are baptized into the one living body, and come to partake of the virtue, benefits, and privileges thereof. Lastly, There is "one God and Father of all," who begat them all, and is to be worshipped by them all, as their Lord and God; he being witnessed and experienced by them to be "above all, and through all, and in" them "all." This is the state in general, the gospel state, into which Christ gives his sheep—his Father's children—en-

To Joseph Wright.

I entreat thy son to acquaint my brother Arthur, that I took very kindly, and was very glad of, his affectionate expressions towards me; having been somewhat jealous, that though *my* religion had enlarged my love towards him, yet *his* religion might have diminished his to me. I bless the Lord on his behalf that he enjoys his health so well; and for myself, though I have been exceedingly weakly formerly, yet the inward life and comfort, which the Lord daily pleaseth to administer to me, increaseth the health and strength of my natural man, beyond my expectation; blessed be my tender and merciful Father, who hath visited one so distressed, miserable, and helpless as I was, for so many years!

And whereas he saith, he is like me in speech, but most unlike me in opinion; I pray tell him from me, that my religion doth not lie in opinion, but in that which puts an end to opinion. I was weary and sick at heart of opinions; and had not the Lord brought that to my hand which my soul wanted, I had never meddled with religion more. But as I felt that in my heart which was evil and not of God, so the Lord God of my life pointed me to that of him in my heart which was of another nature, teaching me to wait for and know his appearance there; in subjection whereto, I experience him stronger than the strong man that was there before; and by his power, he hath separated me from that within, which separated me from him before; and thus being separated, truly I feel union with him, and his blessed presence every day; which, what it is unto me, my tongue cannot utter.

I could be glad, if the Lord saw good, that I might see my brother before I die; and if I did see him, I should not be quarrelling with him about his religion, but embrace him him in brotherly love, and in the fear of the Lord. As for his being a Papist, or an arch-Papist, that doth not damp my tender affection to him. If he be a Papist, I had rather have him a serious than a loose Papist. If he hath met with

hand, but be supported by his secret power, until his work be finished. The great thing necessary for thee at present to know is the drawings of his Spirit; that thou mayst not ignorantly withstand or neglect them, and protract the day of thy redemption.

Oh! look not after great things: small breathings, small desires, after the Lord, if true and pure, are sweet beginnings of life. Take heed of despising "the day of small things," by looking after some great visitation, proportionable to thy distress, according to thy eye. Nay, thou must become a child, thou must lose thy own will quite by degrees. Thou must wait for life to be measured out by the Father, and be content with what proportion, and at what time, he shall please to measure.

Oh! be little, be little; and then thou wilt be content with little: and if thou feel, now and then, a check or a secret smiting,—in *that* is the Father's love; be not over-wise nor over-eager, in thy own willing, running, and desiring, and thou mayst feel it so; and by degrees come to the knowledge of thy Guide, who will lead thee, step by step, in the path of life, and teach thee to follow, and, in his own season, powerfully judge that which cannot nor will not follow. Be still, and wait for light and strength; and desire not to know or comprehend, but to be known and comprehended in the love and life, which seeks out, gathers, and preserves the lost sheep.

I remain thy dear friend, and a well-wisher to thy soul, in the love of my Father.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

Dear Friend,

I received thy letter kindly, and in the tenderness of love, which desires thy enjoyment of the Lord in this world, and the eternal welfare of thy soul with him for ever.

It is a great matter, to have the mind rightly guided to

R.B.R./ [illegible]
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